

BANDWAGON

**THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2003



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FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

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THE FRONT COVER

Chappie Fox served as Vice President of the Circus Historical Society from 1958 to 1963. His CHS membership number was 161.

THE BACK COVER

The cover of the 1929 Downie Bros. Circus courier. It was printed by the Louisville Color Gravure Co.

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SEASON REVIEW NEEDS

It is not too early to send information and photos for the 2003 Season's Review that will appear in the March-April 2004 *Bandwagon*.

Newspaper ads, articles, information and photographs of any circus playing in your area are needed.

Please send your contribution to the editor.

Publication of Statement of Ownership
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I certify the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (Signed) Fred D. Pfening, Jr, publisher. (10-1-03)

BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.
1967-Nov.-Dec.
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Nov.-Dec.
1974-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-All available.
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.
1980-1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-2003-All available.

In addition to above many other issues are available going back to the 1950s. If you are in need of early issues write to the Editor.

Price is \$4.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage for one issue, \$5.00 for more than one issue. Please select substitutes in case we are out of any of above.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES
2515 DORSET RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43221

Charles Philip Fox was a remarkable man with a number of interests. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 27, 1913 the third of six children of George and Mary Fox. His grandfather called Charles Philip Chap. He later became "Chappie." contracted polio at age five, resulting a lifelong limp.

At age seven he was given a box camera that led to a lifelong career as a photographer of horses and an interest in circus horses. However, his interest in animals extended to photographing wildlife.

Fox went to work in 1933 at the Prime Manufacturing Co. where he remained for twenty-six years. Later after marrying Sophie he moved to Oconomowoc renting a farm and land. It was here that he raised wild and domestic animals. Graduating to a 4 x 5 Speed Graphic professional camera his photos appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal*, *LIFE*, *Outdoor Life* and the *National Geographic*. He began writing a number of children's books.

His first circus book in 1948 was titled *Circus Parades*. It was followed by *A Ticket to the Circus* in 1959. In 1969 he joined Tom Parkinson in writing *The Circus in America*. The Fox-Parkinson duo continued with *The Circus Moves By Rail* in 1978 and *Billers, Banners and Bombast* in 1985. Fox and Parkinson then began writing and illustrating a definitive circus book titled *Circus--Mighty Monarch of All Amusements*. After working with various publishers the two volume effort was never published.

In 1960 Fox wrote *A Pictorial History of Performing Horses and Circus Baggage Stock* in 1983. In 1978 he joined with F. Beverly Kelley to write *Great Circus Parades*.

Fox went to Baraboo in the early 1950s to research *A Ticket to the Circus*. It was there that he met John M. Kelly, long-time attorney for the Ringling family and their circuses. Kelly told Fox about his dream of establishing a circus museum in Baraboo. Fox was hooked; he became a Kelly booster on the museum. He was on the board in 1954 when the Circus World Museum was incorporated. The museum was opened on July 1, 1959. The lone building was one of the Ringling winter quarters old horse barns.

By then the America steam calliope and the Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson cage had been acquired through the efforts of Fox.

By late 1959 the State Historical Society determined it was time that a museum director be hired. Fox was available; his long-term employer in Milwaukee had closed.

From his early days as director of the Circus World Museum he began to search out and bring many historic wagons to the Baraboo museum. Scrounging the



Charles Philip Fox

May 27, 1913-September 12, 2003

country Fox kept adding wagons to the museum's collection.

With so many historic parade wagons he was ready to take his second big step, to produce a horse drawn circus parade in Milwaukee. After meeting with a dozen Milwaukee companies with out success he went for the full montie and set his sights on the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company as a potential sponsor of a parade. Fox met with Ben Barkin a Milwaukee public relations man. Barkin liked the idea of staging a circus parade and said he liked the idea and would help him. Schlitz was a Barkin client and he arranged for Fox to meet Robert Uihlein, president of Schlitz. Uihlein went for it and Schlitz became the sponsor for a parade in 1963.

With John M. Kelley riding in the lead car the first Milwaukee parade was staged on July 4, 1963.

Schlitz continued to sponsor the parade for ten years. Fox and Barkin became the dynamic duo as they thought up new features for the next parade. Each year the parade

became bigger,

In 1972 Fox was wooed away from his beloved museum. He resigned to become vice president and research director for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus park being built near Orlando, Florida. Irvin Feld, his new boss, stated, "Chappie Fox is, without question, America's most knowledgeable authority on circuses and circus lore." Fox remained with the Ringling organization until 1977. He returned to Baraboo in 1983.

He was appointed to the Wisconsin State Historical Society board, which owned the Circus World Museum. Fox became a member of the board of the Historic Sites, which was actually the board of the Circus World Museum. He remained a member until his passing.

Fox was honored by being named an honorary fellow of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, one of only seven to be so honored. In addition he received a Historic Preservation Achievement Award for his efforts to preserve the Ringling Bros. site in Baraboo.

In 1973 Fox was a founder of the International Crane Foundation and remained as a long time board member. Earlier he had been a part of the creation of the new Milwaukee zoo in the late 1950s.

Fox was known as the man from Oconomowac. His persona was his felt hat, bow tie and two or three cigars in his shirt pocket.

Charles Philip Fox died on September 12, 2003, at age 90. A celebration of life and holy mass of Christian burial was held on September 18 at the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Baraboo. Following the service the Ringling Bros. Lion tableau and the Bell Wagon were in front of the church. Drawn by Percheron draft horses they led the procession back to the funeral home before Chappie was taken to his plot in Madison where his son Peter is buried.

Traveling With The Big One In 1953

By William C. Taggart

In February of 1953, I went from Hiram College in Ohio where I was a student, to Washington, D.C. to participate in the American University Washington Semester. Twenty five college students from various Midwestern colleges participated in the program. The only student that I remember today from that time was a pal of mine, John Mooneyham, who was from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. His college was made famous as the location where Winston Churchill coined the phrase "Iron Curtain." Carthage Missouri was John's home town.

This was an exciting time to be in Washington. General Eisenhower was President, John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State; Engine Charlie Wilson, Secretary of Defense, and Robert A. Taft was the distinguished Senator from Ohio.

As Washington Semester students we were to spend our days on Capitol Hill attending Congressional hearing, Supreme Court session, and sessions of Congress. A college student with a major in history it was an exciting placed to be. I remember standing in long lines in the Congressional building to attend the Army McCarthy hearings. How most of us hated Senator McCarthy.

At night we attended classes at American University. My favorite course was a class taught by Professor Roy V. Peel, an elderly gentleman who had once been one of FDR's "think-tank" members. It was Dr. Pell who introduced me to one of my favorite books *Plunkett of Tammany Hall. The Life and Times of George Washington Plunkett*. Plunkett was one of the best remembered members of the Tweed Gang. He distinguished carefully between honest and dishonest graft.

I enjoyed studying the politi-



Bill Taggart, a groom in the ring stock department of Ringling-Barnum in 1953. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

cal history of the United States and especially the post Civil War era, the time of the Progressives, Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, Wilson's New Freedom, and FDR's New Deal. I was a child during the New Deal and remember vividly the election between FDR and Wendell Willkie. As we walked home from the country school in Easton, New York we would

Frank Selock with his horse at the performing horse stock car.



recite a little poem, "Kill the rat, kill the mat, kill the dirty democrat." I guess I was growing up in a Republican strong hold. How my ideas did change as later, I took after my Great Aunt Nettie MacMillan, who was a Woodrow Wilson Democrat, believed in Women's rights, and was a true liberal.

About this time, a young writer Bill Ballentine started publishing a series of articles in *Holiday* magazine about his life and times in clown alley on the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus. He wrote of his experiences as a "First of May" in clown alley, about Pat Valdo the performance director, clown, Emmett Kelley, Otto Griebling, Felix Adler, Paul Jung, Jimmy Armstrong, Frankie Saluto, Merle Evans the bandmaster, the Loyal Repenskey Riding Troupe, wild animal trainer Alfred Court and of course, the Flying Concello's. I couldn't wait for *Holiday* to arrive each month and for one of Bill's articles to appear. Circus folks had always been my heroes and how I loved to read about them. Now, almost a half a century later, I am still indebted to Bill Ballentine for his writings, drawings, and his influence on my life.

While in Washington, I discovered that there was a large book store just a few blocks south of the White House on a side street. It was the book store that President Harry Truman use to walk to on his outings. If it was good enough for the former President it was good enough for a young college student from upstate New York. On my first visit to the store, I discovered the performing arts section, and to my surprise there was a new circus book by Fred Bradna. I bought that book and it is still in my library. It is the life

story of a Prussian Military man who came to America and spend almost a half century on Barnum and Bailey and Ringling Brother Barnum and Bailey as Equestrian Director. He wrote of performers Lillian Leitzel, May Wirth, the Zacchini Family, Poodles Hanneford, aerialist Albert Powell, and hundreds of other circus stars. And of course, his wife Ella Bradna and The Act Beautiful . . . her pure white dogs and white performing horses. How I loved reading that book and dreaming of joining the circus. With in a few years I had met all of the circus stars except Leitzel who died in 1931.

After a few days I discovered another circus book while doing some research at the Library of Congress. *I Fell in Love with the Circus* was written by Claire Fawcett and it told of her many visits to the back yard of the "Greatest Show on Earth." The more I read these two books about circus performers, personnel, and life on a ninety car railroad show traveling across American the less important became American University, Hiram College, Capitol Hill, or life back home in upstate New York.

Fate had her way with me for in the spring of 1953 The Greatest Show on Earth opened under canvas in Washington. You can be sure that I waited anxiously for circus day to arrive and that I was on a bus to the circus grounds early to see the first wagons arrive on the lot.

That wonderful May day, even before I had left my dorm at American University, I knew in my mind that Bill Taggart of Hiram College and Clyde, New York was going to spend the summer of 1953 on the "Greatest Show on Earth." Where would I go, who would I ask for a job, what could I do, all those thoughts entered my mind that day as I walked onto the circus lot and steeped up to the ticket wagon to purchase a seat ticket for the matinee. I really wasn't interested in seeing the circus I wanted to join the

circus. After I had my ticket I looked at the side show banner line with painting of Fried Pushnick, the armless and legless girl, Sealo, the seal like man with flippers for arms and Singlee the fire eater from

India, Betty Broadbent, the tattooed lady, and the Doll Family, Harry, Daisy, Gracie and Tiny. I had to have a cotton candy and later a hot dog for lunch. No longer was I child being taken to the circus by Aunt Iva or Inez, or with my Mom or Dad, I was free and ready to explore a new world.

The world that I wanted to explore was a "Barnum and Bailey World." Just as crazy as it could be, a world of sawdust and spangles, ponderous pachyderms, lions and tigers, pink lemonade, trapeze artists, wild animal trainers, and most of all the world of performing horses. For to me at that time and even today, the performing horse is the most beautiful of all trained animals. I am, was, and always will be partial to horses, well trained or schooled horses, be they draft horses cantering around a ring, prancing hackney horses and ponies, high school or dressage horses, or graceful saddle bred from Kentucky. I always loved the dapple gray percherons loping around the circus ring with skilled acrobats astride them. My favorite circus horse of all time, however, was Starless Night a saddlebred mare that with its trainer Captain William Heyer was featured on the Ringling Show and other great circuses.

Back home in Clyde, during the forties my heroes were not only military men, great scientists, or political leaders but those fellows who rode across the screen ever Friday night at the Clyde Play House. They were Tom Mix and Tony, Hopalong Cassidy and Topper, Gene Autry and Champion, Roy Rogers and Trigger, as well as Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, and Johnny Mack Brown. Not only were they heroes on the silver

Unloading the performing horses.



screen but many of these men appeared with circuses from time to time. Tom Mix has his own motorized circus and was married to a circus aerialist, Mable Ward.

Not only did my heroes ride horseback but so did I, all my life. My Dad bought me my first horse, a little Shetland pony in 1936 at the Schaghicoke Fair, just North of Troy, New York. I soon graduated from the pony to a retired race horse. Later after my Dad died and while I was living with my Aunt and Uncle in Clyde, I had a chubby pinto horse, black and white, named Gipsy. When a freshman in high school I sold her and bought a saddle bred named Nancy. She was a dapple gray walk trot horse. I was proud of her.

Many afternoons after school I would go home, grab a peanut butter sandwich, go to the barn, saddle Nancy and ride down to the large fields behind the Clyde Central School. Out beyond the baseball field Nancy became my center ring dressage horse. She cantered in large ring size circles, did flying lead changes, came back to a slow trot, and into an extended trot. Nancy was my center ring dressage horse . . . my Starless Night. If I concentrated I could even hear Merle Evans and the circus band in my mind. I did have a good imagination. Many years later, when Merle was a personal friend I was able to thank him for helping Nancy and I.

But now, in 1953 I was far away from home in Clyde I was in Washington, D.C. and so was the circus. With my knowledge of horses and the desire to join the big show I realized that the best way for me to find a job was with ring stock grooming horses. I now had a plan of operation. After the matinee I went into the back yard of the circus and found my way to the horse tops. I asked someone for the boss and they pointed to a man sitting on the steps of a pad wagon. He was Frank Selock, superintendent of ring stock. At that time he was about sixty, spoke with a bit of an accent and looked as tough as leather.

He wore a cowboy hat and shirt, Levis, western boots. He was well tanned and his face was as wrinkled as that of any

true cowboy but instead of herding cattle on a ranch he was herding horses and cowboys on the circus and from lot to lot across the country. He walked with a limp but when mounted sat with a good western cowboy seat on his horse. Above all, he looked and acted like a seasoned circus boss. Frank's assistants were "old man Miller" and "Dutch" Warner.

Somehow I managed to get Frank Selock aside and told him that I wanted to spend the summer working on ring stock. I told him of my experience with horses. I could ride, drive, and groom horses with the best of them. He took me over to another wagon near the horse tops and introduced me to "Doc" Henderson, the circus vet and his assistant vet William Higgins. After a few questions from them, I had my circus job for the summer.

I told them that I would go back to college, finish my examinations, and meet the show in Jersey City, New Jersey. After that I visited with a few of the grooms, watched the horses eating and resting between shows. When it was about time for the evening performance Doc Higgins took me inside the back door and took me to head usher Pete Grace. Soon I was sitting in a center ring seat, four rows from the front and the best in the house.

After the performance, I went back said good bye to my new friends and left the lot, after tear down with a 1953 Route Card showing where and when the show would be Jersey City and in my wallet and in my heart dreams of circus days to come.

I was a happy guy that spring in Washington but little did I realize that my decision to join the circus would be one of the most important decisions of my life. It would determine my life style for the rest of my life. I was about to get wanderlust and sawdust in my blood. I didn't realize then the towns and cities I was to play, the great bosses and friends I would have, the joys and sorrows that were to come along, the smiles and tears, and most of all the love I would always have for the tented circus. I went back to American University to finish my exams, some



Walking the ring stock horses from the train to the lot.

I arranged to take early and didn't tell anyone except one professor, Dr. Roy V. Peel, that I was going off with the circus. He thought that was an adventurous idea and wished me well. Within a few days exams were completed and I was at the Greyhound Bus Station, downtown Washington, late one night to catch a bus to my destination Jersey City, New Jersey. It was an over night run and I still remember traveling through Maryland, Delaware, and southern New Jersey past the large vegetable farms and dairy farms that feed the metropolitan region. I arrived at the Jersey City bus station, which was actually a large barber shop, about the largest I had ever seen, and waited for them to unload my duffel bag. I was surprised to find that my baggage was not there. I waited for a few more buses to arrive but none arrived with my bags so I finally took a city bus to the circus lot. I didn't want to wait a minute more to hit the sawdust trail. It was June 9, 1953. On this warm summer day, I forgot all about my college life and its academic complications and entered an entirely different world. My visit to that world I will never forget. I will always remember those fine weeks of the summer of 1953 as one of the milestones of my life. This is my remembrances of my travels with the giant show business organization then known to the public and "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Combine Shows, Inc., The Greatest Show on Earth." As I walked through the midway, past the side show banner line, the cotton candy stands, the popcorn wagon, the

frozen custard wagon, the circus dinner and the souvenir vendor joints, I could hear the laughter of the matinee audience, the solid brass notes of the circus band, and the golden voice of Count Nicholas, the ring master. In the backyard, the liberty horses were lined up, two by two with their grooms waiting to prance into the big top. Wardrobe men were busily taking the "Candyland"

spec wardrobe off the elephants. In all of this confusion, I was not able to see Frank Selock the ring stock boss. I eventually found him at what I learned was his usual spot, sitting on a large blue trunk in front of the horse tops. He greeted me with a smile, a hello, a handshake and said "I didn't really expect the college kid from Washington, D. C. to show up for work. You have to be a pretty determined guy." Frank was quiet, never said a word to anyone, except when he was sitting in his canvass chair and engaged in a bull session with some of his men. He was always ready for a good laugh or a funny joke. As superintendent of ring stock, he had complete responsibility for the horses but he seldom gave orders. He was the type of person that likes to leave most decisions up to his workers instead of shouting orders all of the time. When he did tell you something, you listened and then did what you were told. Men had a great deal of respect for Frank. His dark suntanned face was usually hidden under the shadow of his flat tan hat and behind his gold rimmed specs. He walked with a limp, because he wore a wooden leg, as the result of an accident a few years back. His bad leg never stopped him from getting around, nor did it keep him from riding horseback. He always rode at the head of the ring stock line, to and from the stock cars, astride his favorite horse, Pride, and leading two of the more spirited horses. His appearance was that of a real cowboy.

He introduced me to veteran showmen who were to become my friends for that summer. There was Old Pete, a veteran of many seasons, Ralph, a grand fatherly looking man with a

jovial smile, Frenchy, a short little Canadian man, and Mac and Tex all of them were the "trapping crew."

They worked out of the pad wagon that was Ralph's domain. Ralph was about seventy years old, short and squatty, quiet, but even at his age he would take no sass from any of the young wise guys. Everyone respected Ralph and knew that he was the boss of the red harness wagon. He had a thin crop of white hair, round face, large red nose, and wore a pair of plastic glasses and a large belly that made him look even shorter. He was always very clean though dressed to work, with his blue baseball hat, white tee shirt, and khaki wash pants. I never saw him when his jaw wasn't manipulating a rather large hunk of chewing tobacco.

Ralph did most of his work during the set up and the tear down. In the morning after breakfast he would help spread the horse tops, stretch the picket-lines, unload harness. At night he would just load the harness wagon as we brought saddles, bridles and all the other equipment him. During the day he'd be sitting in his wagon, splicing lead lines, reading the paper, or just taking a catnap.

Whenever I wanted to hear about the "good old days" or how the circus use to be I would visit with Ralph. He had worked on the big top crew, in the cookhouse, and finally ended up on ring stock. Thanks to Ralph, I was able to take a bath or "boil up" anytime I wanted. I use to go over and hang around the wagon waiting until he would say, "What the hell you want Bill?" "To boil up," would be my reply. "I knew it, I knew it," he would say, "but just clean the wagon up after your are finished, you circus bums are always wanting something from me."

Old Pete was the work leader. I followed him like a puppy. He was the boss of the tack gang and came from Minneapolis, a city that is proud of its long circus heritage. I never did learn how many years he had spent with shows but I believe it was most of his life.

His face and shaggy hair would remind you of Pluto, the dog from the Disney cartoon, however, he had



Inside the ring stock horse tent.

much more ambition than Pluto. Rather than ask anyone to help him grease a buggy wheel, put up the lights, fix a tack box, or a wagon tongue, he would do it himself. He developed the loading of a circus wagon into a science.

I was astonished, the first time I watched Pete load the Crumb box wagon. All the fifty suitcases, twenty cots, ten or twelve bed rolls, and the large tack boxes, Pete would place in position every night. Woe be unto you if you didn't hand him the right box when he called for it. Every box had its own spot in the wagon, and no where else.

Once in Allentown, Pete was a little "guyed out" so Frank told him to steep it off rather than help load, he slept under protest. The next morning he looked into the wagon and shouted, "Who the hell loaded this wagon, Jesus Christ, can't a man get drunk once in a while without having his wagon all shot to hell." All day long Pete constantly bitching about the bastard who had loaded his wagon. Our crew helped ring stock but didn't groom the horses.

It was about five-thirty and Pete told me that "the flag was up" and we headed for the cookhouse. Pete had a ticket for me which was collected by a fellow standing at the entrance to the long side of the cookhouse tent. I sat with Pete and the others at the ring stock table and enjoyed my first meal on the road, meatloaf, boiled potatoes, spinach, and lemon pie. Since I had hardly eaten that day I went for seconds, which you could do. The food was delicious, and the pie homemade by the big show bakers back at the large cookhouse ovens behind the cookhouse.

After supper we all sat around the

ring stock pad wagon and visited until seven. By that time the grooms were bringing their "crumb boxes" over to the wagon. Each "crumb box" was full of grooming supplies, a curry comb, body brush, mane comb, hoof pick, a swiping cloth. We tossed them to Ralph, who was in charge of the wagon and he loaded them in the back of the wagon so there would still be

room for the harnesses, saddles, and other ring stock equipment before the wagon was closed to be hauled to the train later that night. We then set-out the horse wardrobe for spec and handed out the liberty horse harnesses. There were thirty-six harnesses for the three liberty acts, twelve horses in each ring. They were made of red, white, and blue dyed leather, the bridles, back pads, and crupper straps, as well as check and side reins. They were all made at winter quarters by Waxey the show harness-maker. At seven-fifteen, Jimmy Armstrong, a dwarf clown in the Paul Jung troupe, blew "first-call" on his bugle. This call reminded everyone in the backyard to prepare for the evening's performance.

After the show started, I helped Pete and the others collect saddles and harnesses as they were finished being used and we took them from the grooms to Ralph to be loaded. Soon we were busy loading the kicking bars that were used to separate horses along the picket line and after the manage number "Kentucky Derby Honeymoon" we took the wheels off the carriages and loaded wheels and carriages into red wagons.

I remember one Victoria, we took the wheels off and loaded it into the underside of the band wagon, while Merle Evans and the band were up on top of the band wagon playing the performance music. Before long the horses were finished with their parts of the performance and they were lined up three abreast, with a groom riding the center horse and leading a horse to his left and right. Frank Selock was riding a stallion of John Ringling North's while leading the line of sixty ring stock horses along the route to the circus train. Our crew stayed behind with old Pete and

tore down the two horse tops, rolled and loaded the canvas, side poles, center poles, and all the rest of the ring stock equipment into the wagons. About midnight, we were finished and we went over to where the circus bus was parked waiting to give workers a ride to the train. When we arrived at the "runs" the horses were already loaded into their stock cars and all the grooms were at our railroad car, number twenty-three, Nebraska. Miller showed me to a top bunk and after a ham sandwich and cold Coke I found myself almost asleep as the Flying Squadron, the first section of the train, slowly pulled out of the railroad yards of Jersey City.

June 10, Allentown, Pennsylvania. I was awake, slipped on my pants, and climbed out of my bunk early, almost before anyone in the sleeper. "Yum Yum" our porter was serving home brewed coffee and I took my hot coffee outside the coach early enough to watch the bright summer sunrise in the east over the Allentown railroad yard. The Flying Squadron had been split into two sections and the railroad crew and the razorbacks, were starting to unload the green dining department wagons from the flat cars. This crew of husky men removed the chuck-blocks from in front of the wagon wheels, lowered the wagon tongues, and pinned them to the caterpillars so that they could be pulled along the flat cars, down the ramps to the trucks waiting to haul several wagons at a time along the route to the lot. The lot was the Great Allentown Fairgrounds, which was a distance from the railroad yards where the trains were being unloaded. Once on the crowded circus bus and standing in the aisle I could look out the windows at the crowds of "towners" were standing along the street watching the parade of red and green wagons, yellow tractors, canvas trucks, pole wagons, cage wagons, and plodding bulls following the flare marked route to the fair grounds.

Before breakfast was ready we stood around to watch the "cat" drivers spot the circus wagons once they arrived on the lot. Within a few minutes the tall center poles of the big top were standing majestically in the air flying the American flag and the

show banners as canvas crews were unloading, unrolling, spreading, and lacing the large sections of blue canvas that was to become the largest circus tent in the world. All of this work was under the direction of George Warner, the big top canvas boss. The center field of the fair grounds was quickly being transformed into a tented city. All of this was happening as I walked with my new friends over to the open cookhouse and handed my breakfast ticket to "Cupcake" before entering the cookhouse for breakfast.



Dr. William Y. Higgins, left, and Dr. J. Y. Henderson.

Breakfast that day was corn flakes, coffee, creamed ham on biscuits, and seconds if you wanted them. How wonderful that breakfast tasted on that summer morning. Sitting there in the cookhouse tent you could smell the fresh mown grass of the lot, the aroma of the ovens baking biscuits. After we finished eating, we headed to the area set aside for the horse tops. Here chubby little Johnny Blink was overseeing the spotting off the horse tops. It was hard work tugging the bundles of heavy canvas down from the wagon, unrolling the bulky sections, spreading them out on the dew covered grass, placing and driving the stakes, setting the metal side poles, tying the tent ropes around the tent stakes and then pushing up the center poles of the tent as the side poles were also

lifted into position. Before long our crew had the tents up and then tightened the picket lines on each side of the tent where the horses would be tied, side by side. We then unloaded the harness and saddle racks that were spotted in a line through the center of the two tops. Soon the horses were arriving, their hay was spread out for them to eat, and then each groom was graining his horses. The ring stock was enjoying their morning meal and the fresh air after spending the night on the train riding from Jersey City to Allentown.

Dutch Warner, Frank Selock's assistant, took me over to the Green Hornet, wagon 104, which was the commissary and pay wagon, where Bill Webster, the paymaster, signed me up as an employee of Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey. Imagine, I was going to really get paid for working on the circus, traveling from town to town, and taking care of circus horses, I couldn't believe it. My pay was the enormous sum of \$12.00 a week plus room and board. Then I went to another wagon where Doc Roberts gave me a short physical. We had a pleasant conversation during which I learned that his son, Franz, a University of North Carolina student, was working for the summer on the show as a usher.

During the performance, I was busy harnessing liberty horses and helped harness and hitch teams to the spec floats, and a team of white percherons to the "Tally-Ho" that Miller drove in the manage number. We had to work fast between acts that used horses as it seemed horses were constantly being taken to the back door of the big top to meet the performers that would exhibit them in various acts.

Between shows "lot lice" or locals were walking around the tops exploring the circus lot. A small group had gathered to watch Deafy the show blacksmith, trim and shoe two of the horses.

Later, I went over to the Vet wagon and introduced myself to Doc and Mrs. Higgins. Doc Higgins was sitting in the wagon writing letters and Mrs. Higgins was reading a story to their young daughter Suzanne. Doc had retired from a large dairy farm practice in New Jersey and decided

to join the circus and care for more exotic animals. He was Doc Henderson's assistant.

We became close friends. I spent my time during the evening show collecting tack and bringing it to Ralph who packed it away in the pad wagon. He was about seventy years young, short squatty and never took anything from the "wise guys" even at is age. Men respected Ralph and knew that he is boss of the harness wagon. He had a thick crop of white hair, round red face, large strawberry nose, that held up a pair or horn rimmed glasses, and a large belly that made him look even shorter. He was always very clean and dressed to work with is blue baseball hat, white tee-shirt, and khaki pants. He was always chewing a large hunk of tobacco.

He did most of his work during set up and tear down. In the morning after breakfast he would help spread the horse tops, stretch the picket-lines, and unload harness. At night he would just load the harness wagon. During the day he would be sitting in his wagon, splicing lead lines, reading the paper, or just taking a bit of shuteye. When ever I wanted to hear about the "good old days" or how the circus use to be, I would visit with Ralph. He had worked on the canvass gangs, in the cookhouse, and finally ended up on ring stock.

Thanks to Ralph, I was able to take a bath or "boil up" anytime I wanted. I use to go over and hang around the red wagon, waiting until he'd say "What the hell you want Bill?" "To boil up," would be my reply. "I knew it, I knew it," he would say, "but just clean the wagon up after your finished, you circus bums are always wanting something from me."

Again, my final job that evening was helping Old Pete and crew roll the Victoria into the bandwagon while the band was playing the "blow off" or finale music.

June 14, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Fans were out to greet the silver and red circus train as it pulled into the Bridgeport railroad yards. The tracks were right between the city and Long Island Sound and just a few blocks from Sirkorsky Park where we were to play. Our arrival was another homecoming for the "Big One," as



The Talley Ho wagon used in the big Kentucky Derby Honeymoon manege number.

Barnum and Bailey once had winter quarters in the city that was once the home of showman P.T. Barnum. The morning of our arrival the air was cold and a dampness coming from the Sound hung over the city. To keep warm outside our car we amused ourselves by playing tag with Murphy, Carl, Flynn, Beans, and I joined the rest of the grooms at the stock cars when Frank called out "unload em. boys."

Once at the lot we feed, watered, and bedded down the horses and by two in the afternoon we had all the harnesses unloaded and on their tack racks. We then laced down the side walls and "crumbed up" in preparation for a free afternoon. I walked to town with Carl and Flynn to buy some snacks and when we tried to return to our section of the train it had been moved. We looked down the tracks and could see circus cars and then walked about a mile east only to discover that it was the third section. In desperation we took a city bus back to the lot and later took the show bus to our cars. I sat up in my bunk and wrote letters most of the evening, while others played cards, told stories or cut up Jackpots.

June 15, Bridgeport. Connecticut. I was at the lot at seven, ate breakfast then feed and watered my horses, cleaned or picked up their straw bedding, and opened a bale of timothy hay for them. The rest of the morning, I helped Ralph in the pad wagon clean and oil saddles, bridles, and harnesses. When I was sure that we were going to have a sunny day I "boiled down" my dirty clothes. A lady walking by the horse tops was surprised to see me wrapping my levis around a iron tent stake and

twisting the clothes to wring them out. I hung my laundry out to dry on a line tied from Doc Higgins wagon to a side pole of the horse tops. Joe Bananas, the circus mailman delivered mail to us. It was his job to go to the post office each morning early as possible, to bring all the circus mail to the lot. Of course, the official office mail was always delivered first. Later he went from department to department with their mail. I was lucky; I had three letters from home and a copy of *We Fell in Love with the Circus* by Claire Fawcett. The book was packed full of pictures and stories about Claire's traveling with the show during the forty-nine season. Everyone on ring stock enjoyed looking at the book and it was passed around the entire day. That night, I took it to the train and locked it in my "crumb box" for safekeeping.

My new German friend, Heinz, who was a dressage rider, and I sat in Doc's wagon and visited about his circus experiences in Germany before the flag went up for lunch. At lunch, I filled myself with all the boiled franks and sauerkraut that I could eat. Back at the tops, I groomed my horses until they were sleek and then Heinz treated me to a cup of coffee at the back yard grease joint that was spotted near to back entrance of the big top. It was a convenient place for circus folks to meet and congregate when they had breaks.

Emmett Kelly, the feature circus clown, had visitors that afternoon and they treated him to a picnic, by a large old Maple tree, in the back yard. What more could a tramp clown ask for?

Later, when he wasn't working the audience in the big top, he was visiting with his friends.

Circus fever was at a high pitch, that day in Bridgeport, as we had two full houses.

Chuck and Carl asked me to go swimming with them between shows but instead I sat in one of the buggies visiting with Doc and Mrs. Highness and watching the "lot lice" explore the backyard.

While I was grooming Night Rider before the evening show, he seemed off to me on his food and he wasn't drinking his pail of water so I told Doc and he thought he might have a bit of a cold or sore throat from the

cold and rainy weather. Doc gave me a bottle of white lineament to rub on the horses neck glands for the next few days. When I applied the lineament it smelled so good I was tempted to use it on my neck.

That night the ride to the stock cars seemed long as Rider and Ex were constantly tugging on their lead lines. A crowd was gathered to watch the horses climb up the ramps into the cars as each horse was called for by name. Actually, all the horses knew when it was their turn to load and they also knew that grain would be waiting in the individual feed boxes. Out stock car was the first to be loaded and Heinz and I were the first ones in line for grub at Yummy Yum's kitchen. We each had a corned beef sandwich on rye bread with a large slice of onion and lots of mustard and to celebrate leaving Bridgeport we washed them down with cans of cold beer

June 16, Springfield, Massachusetts. The circus trains pulled right into town, the industrial district of this New England city, which was situated on the East bank of the Connecticut River. The haul was a mile through town, through a under pass, and then a sharp left over a bridge, and another left on to he lot which was at the old Springfield baseball park. It was a grassy lot along the river and the horses loved it, all the grass that they could eat. The ring stock men referred to the grass as "Doctor Green" as the grass made the horses feel fresh and frisky.

Johnny Blink's crew didn't have the horse tops up when we arrived on the lot so we tied the stock to wagons and floats then everyone helped spread, stretch, lace and raise the two tops. After I had watered my horses, spread their straw bedding, and opened their two bales of hay, I was tired, dirty, sticky, and dusty. I heated a pail of water on the blacksmith's forge and then went into Ralph's pad wagon to "crumb up" or take a sponge bath. For lunch we had macaroni and cheese with sliced ham, and apple pie for dessert. It hit the spot and when I left the cook-

house with Pete and Ralph I really felt great. I was ready to go to the horse tops and groom my three horses for the show. I washed the stains off my horse's legs and then curried, brushed, and swiped each horse to perfection. Finally I pulled their tails until they were fluffy. The fancy red and blue liberty harnesses looked showy on each of the animals. When we weren't busy working the show during the afternoon we visited with a group of circus fans who were in the backyard some of them had come from as far as Albany and Boston to catch the show. Louie Brusie and Gordon Turner were from the Albany area and I didn't know it then but they would become long time friends and we would travel down the sawdust trail for many years together.



A Montreal bill stand in 1953.

Between show Doc Higgins and I took a walk along the Connecticut River from where we could see over to West Springfield, which was the home of one of the earliest fairs or expositions in the United States. Doc Higgins told me that it was also the home of a little stallion who eventually went to Vermont and was named after his schoolteacher owner Justin Morgan. "Justin Morgan" the horse gained famed as the foundation sire of the Morgan breed.

Before first call I went to the grease joint for a Coke and "Red," who worked as a grill man there, asked me if I was Doc Higgins son. I said no, but from then on he called me Higgins, Jr. That was fine with me because I was proud to have Doc Higgins as a friend.

That night when I took Greyhound out to meet Elsie Jung before the "Kentucky Derby Honeymoon" number Elsie had a real treat for her mount. She surprised him with a treat of "Tums for his Tummy."

Seems that college students had been passing out free samples of Tums to the people coming to the show. Performers, naturally went out front to get free samples for the people to give to the elephants and horses. Greyhound slobbered all over his full bridal bit and I had to wipe his mouth and the bits before he went trotting into the tent.

June 17, Manchester, New Hampshire. The lot was only two blocks from the crossing where the trains were split into sections and the railroad cars were being unloaded. As always, Mr. McGrath, the railroad transportation boss was there supervising as each wagon came off the train. We all walked to the lot where the cookhouse was feeding hungry roust-a-bouts. I ate two plates of French toast and drank two cups of hot coffee.

Back at the stock cars we waited to unload to give Blink's crew time to pitch the horse tops.

Flynn entertained us with World War II stories as he had served in the Army in

the European campaign. By now I had enough experience unloading stock so that I knew the horses by name and the order in which they came down the ramps. The process was now fast and easy for me.

Back at the lot, Cowboy, Carl and I had worked out a system for moving our tack into the top from Ralph's pad wagon. Cowboy took bridles, and grooming bags; Carl carried in the galvanized water pails and harness hooks, and I brought in the saddles. Later we all went back to the wagon for the heavy liberty harnesses. This was all completed while the horses were eating their hay, laying for short naps, or just rolling and shaking to relax. After feeding we tried to always give the horses time to just be contend horses. It was good to rest them before getting ready for the show.

The lot was small and crowded. The cookhouse was a "duckie run" or long walk from the backyard. We had to walk along the side of the big top, behind the midway, past the kid show, and across the street. I remem-

ber that after dinner that evening the "hooligans" had a soccer game on a grassy spot behind the horse tops. It was the German performers vs. the Italians and other nationalities. They had a good time and everyone enjoyed forgetting about circus work for a while.

When it was time to take the horses to the backdoor of the top we had to first go out into a street, up a block, then back on to the show grounds. People lined the street to see the "circus parade." That night on our way back to the trains Chuck was leading a pair of Clydesdales down the road when suddenly a youngster broke a balloon, which frightened the team. Both horses jumped and ran down the street dragging Chuck but fortunately he held on to their lead shanks and stopped them before someone was injured. At anytime with over sixty ring stock horses something could go wrong so we always had to be cautious and careful.

Manchester was a good show town, as we had two large houses at each performance, but like always we were ready to move on to another date.

June 18, Portland, Maine. Going to breakfast our bus traveled along the Portland waterfront, out into the country, past an old icehouse and pond, and then down a farmer's lane to a sunburned piece of ground that was to become the site of our one-day stand. After a quick breakfast of creamed sausage and biscuits we rode the bus back to the stock cars registering the miles in our minds; miles that we were to ride that morning and again late that night. This was a real "dukierun," nine miles from the crossing to the lot. It was warm that morning and my saddle pad was soaked with Charlotte's sweat and my hands were burning from holding the lead ropes from Night Rider and Pete by the time we finished the long ride. If I ever smelled horses, it was on that June morning.

I didn't think that Rider's appetite was normal so Doc Higgins decided to float his teeth. California Red held the twitch on his nose, I held the lead shank tight with the chain over his

nose, and Doc did the dental work. Listening to the scrapes of the file as it passed over the sharp edges of his teeth, I understood why he was trying to protest. Sharp edges on this teeth were making it difficult for him to chew and we were really helping the horse. He didn't understand and pounded one hoof on the ground and switched his black tail in protest.

Before the lunch flag went up, I washed my spare pair of Levis and then wrote a short letter home. Old Ralph told me what a "dukier card" was and I walked over the commissary wagon to purchase one. A card could be purchased for five or ten dollars and each time you made a purchase at the commissary it was punched to debit the money you spent. I happened to stand in line with Otto Griebing, the great tramp clown, it was the first time that I recognized him out of his make-up.



Oscar Konyot with one of his lions.

Between shows Doc Higgins and I sat on top of the "Tally Ho," our favorite spot, high and away from lot lice. Someone had given Doc a copy of the latest *Billboard* and we were reading the circus section.

It was a long nine mile ride that night as we took the horses to the train. The horses seemed tired but their pace quickened as we and they could look down the road and see the stock cars. The usual Cummings electric generator, with a set of powerful lights was lighting the runs as the train crew could poled the wagons up the ramps and onto the flat cars. We quickly loaded our stock, and went to

the Nebraska for coffee and a hamburger. Ralph and I sat with the others along the train while all of the show was coming home to the train.

June 19, Bangor, Maine. Old Man Miller let us stay in the sack a bit longer this morning because of the short haul from the runs to the lot which was the fairgrounds. When he did come down the aisle to wake us I was happy to hear him say, "Bangor, Bangor, Maine." I had always wanted to visit the town because the name seemed to fascinate me. When we climbed down the Nebraska's steps into the fresh Maine air and bright warm, morning sunshine anyone could tell that this was to be a great show town, hundreds of people, of all ages, were gathered along the tracks.

Even popular Hollywood leading lady, Betty Davis was out with her daughter and friends to greet the Ringling show. Later in the day they attended the matinee and explored the circus lot. After the performance I was able to see her standing outside the red wagon, John Ringling North's office, talking to Nina Evans, Johnny's North's secretary.

During the haul Flash pulled and lost a shoe so after he finished his bran and oats I took him to the blacksmith shop. While Deafy trimmed his front hooves the other blacksmith heated and shaped a pair of half round shoes for his front hooves. I was busy keeping the flies off the horse and inquisitive children from standing behind Flash.

Word spread around the lot that animal trainer Oscar Konyot had trouble with the lions during the matinee. One or two of the cats were in heat and difficult to work. When the steel arena was reset between shows most folks migrated into the tent and gathered around the ring to watch Oscar work the act before the evening performance. Heinz and I were standing outside the ring curb when Konyot entered the steel arena, whip and chair in hand, and asked his assistants to let the cats enter. Several came rushing in, growling and whipping their tails in anger.

Patiently he maneuvered the cats to their individual pedestals and one

by one he called upon them to do their individual tricks; standing on rear legs, rolling over, jumping through a hoop of fire and lying on the ground motionless in front of the trainer. Once large male lion suddenly sprang from his pedestal and started to go after the female lion. Konyot cracked his whip and charged the lion with the chair he was holding and forced him back to the pedestal. Suddenly, the lion sprang into the air and knocked the trainer to the ground and grabbed Konyot with his sharp tearing front claws. As spectators screamed the lion clawed the trainer's arm.

His assistant ran into the arena, prodded the lion with a huge pole to get his attention, and drove him back to the pedestal. Someone else rushed in, helped Konyot to his feet and helped him exit the arena. Doc Roberts was there to care for the trainer and before long they were rushing him to the Bangor Hospital. He didn't work again for several weeks.

Before the evening doors, Merle and the band rehearsed some new music for the Canadian tour. The enthusiasm of the musicians seemed to reflect the excitement that was building on the show to start our Canadian tour.

Equestrian director Count Angelo Nicholas.

After manage I took Greyhound and my horse back to the horse tops and then headed to the grease joint for coffee. While there, Doc Robert's son, Franz, came up and introduced himself. His Dad had asked him to look me up. We hit it off immediately as we were the only college students on the show and because, during our conversation, I learned that he had gone to Valley Forge Military Academy with my college roommate, Larry Newingham. This was the second season Roberts had spent on the road.

June 20, Lewiston, Maine. Jim, an



Emmett Kelly riding on the Candyland spec float.

old white percheron rosinback, was lame in the morning and had to struggle to make the distance to the lot. After soaking his leg in epsom salts and water and then a rub down of white lineament and rapping his leg he was left to rest for the day. At night it was easier for him to walk back to the train. I felt sad for the old horse, however, because we knew that his days on the show were numbered. Doc Henderson was making arrangements for him to be left at a farm in the states with a vet who liked to keep old circus horses.

The lot was rough and on the edge of a woods. When we got there Blink didn't have the tops up so once again we tied the stock until the tents were ready. Five horses got loose and started heading for the tall grass. Deacon Blanchfield, the head of the truck department helped us round them up and gave Frank Selock a bit of a kidding.

Frank collected us all together before lunch and asked us to fill out immigration cards for the authorities. We then had to go to an immigration tent, near the cookhouse, turn in the cards, answer a few questions, and then our names were officially placed on the show manifest. Kinkers and workmen were anxious to learn if there were any foreign acts or "Hulligans" who would not be

allowed into Canada. After lunch, the Green Hornet had the pay window open and I was first in line and signed a pay stub and collected my pay of \$12.

It was hot in the big top that afternoon as I rode my horse down the hippodrome track and the first ring where I sat on him during spec. I watched Otto Griebbling juggle his pie tins, and do his hat tossing routine and enjoyed the reaction of the audience and the spec music. The song I'll always remember his *Here Comes the Show boat, here comes the show boat, huff, puff, puffing along, daddy and mammy and feeling happy, way down upon the Swanee shore.*

All this while a float depicting a Mississippi River Show Boat pulled by two white horses moved by me. When I rode out of the tent at the end of spec I was wringing wet.

Between shows I took a torn saddle girth to Waxey and he repaired it. In a few seconds he spliced the girth, threaded his leather needle, mounted his sewing stool, clamped the girth into position and stitched away on the leather. He had been a show harness maker for years, many of them on the old Cole Brothers Circus. Later, I would learn that many of the top people on the Ringling show came over from the Cole show.

Before "first call" Count Nicholas and Merle Evans collected folks in the backyard to have a big birthday party for one of the musicians who was celebrating his seventieth birthday. He enjoyed his cake and all the attention. He had been with Merle for many years and before that, as a young man he was on the Sousa Band.

The first section didn't pull out until late so I sat along the tracks with Heinz, Flynn, Tex, and Chief. We cut up jackpots. Further down the tracks the black big top crew had set up a crap game and were rolling them bones. "Chicken Charlie," a black porter, and veteran of many years on the Ringling show loved to shoot craps with his friends and made plenty of money. The chief, Mac, and I visited the race track stables before lunch; we tried to talk to the grooms but They all spoke



French. We did see some sleek trotters and pacers. At lunch I ate with a chap named Junior. He loves the circus and wants to become a juggler. His idol is Deiter Tasso, our center ring juggler.

Show folks are running out of American cigarettes and finding it difficult to pay forty cents a pack for American brands at the commissary. Before supper, I noticed that Diamond had pulled a rear shoe so Deafy had to throw on a replacement. He did this inside the horse top since the blacksmith shop tent was already down. Cupcake, from the cookhouse, came over to the horse tops with loaves of bread for the horses. They enjoyed the treat.

June 24, Cornwall, Canada. When I arrived at the cookhouse for breakfast there were my Aunt Inez and Uncle Ed from the states. I was surprised but pleased to see them. My Aunt, naturally thought that I looked a bit tired but reluctantly approved of my being on the show. Uncle Ed thought it was a good experience for me. I made arrangement for them to have breakfast with me but later left them to go back to the stock cars for the horses.

While waiting to unload Heinz and I talked with an interesting Canadian farmer. Both he and his son spoke with pronounced English accents. We enjoyed meeting them. They had no conception of the size of the Ringling show. It was a holiday for them; they were going to the matinee of the circus and that were to see English Music Hall star Gracie Fields in concert. She was "day and dating" us in Cornwall.

The show lot was by far the worst that I had played. It was full of ditches, huge rocks, and old street; it had once been the sight of an Army camp. Aunt Inez and Uncle Ed meet my boss Frank, Doc and Mrs. Higgins, Heinz and many of the chaps I worked with. Frank gave them center ring seats for the afternoon performance.

We were now in English speaking Ontario. Count Nicholas was once again announcing the show and Harold Ronk singing the Candyland spec, Kentucky Derby Honeymoon number, and web number. Buck, Jim and another rosin-back were frightened by the spec



Marion Seifert lady dressage rider.

bulls as we were waiting by the back door to go in for the riding act. One of the bull men brought old Ruth too close to the horses, she let out a squeak, and Buck jumped forward, reared, and turned on his hindquarters to run back to the horse top. All of this happened so fast and I found myself getting up off the gravel. Buck was still excited as he looped around the ring, a bit too fast for Rusty Parent and the other girls to enjoy doing the act. Rusty didn't know what was going on.

Uncle Ed and Aunt Inez took Heinz and I to dinner that evening

Roberto de Vasconcellos featured dressage rider.



downtown Cornwall. Count Nicholas and friends were also at the restaurant. I was expecting my aunt and uncle to ask me to leave the show but the subject was never approached. Actually, they were enjoying having me on the road. They drove us back to the lot and then to Montreal to see us again the next day.

Franz Roberts and I met at the grease joint later that night and talked over our Montreal plans. Later, I took my horses in for liberty and when we came out of the top the night air was cool and the two old troopers jumped and tossed their heads like two young colts when I released the side reins.

June 25, Montreal, Canada. Kinkers, bossmen, workmen were all looking forward to Montreal and the four-day stand. Stock also needed the rest. The horses would be able to lay down at night on thick bedding of straw and not have to standing in the jolting railroad cars.

Just after we finished setting up my Aunt and Uncle arrived and stayed until after lunch. They took photographs, met Emmett Kelly, and talked with Doc and Mrs. Higgins. We said goodbye just before first call. That afternoon the finale was cut from the matinee as the sky became dark and a strong wind was hitting us. Pat Valdo wanted the audience out of the top before the wind started lifting the quarter poles up and down. Merle and the band were happy as they didn't have to march in finale but instead could run to the cookhouse. No group of people went to the cookhouse on a faster clip than the circus band.

That night, after manage, I took a bale of extra straw and deep bedded my string, watered them, and rolled down the side wall before I cleaned up and changed clothes to head for town and St. Catherines Street. Heinz and I were just leaving the lot when the crowd came out of the top. We visited the local taverns, drank Canadian ale, and taxied to the coach at three a.m.

June 26, Montreal, Canada. Night Rider by now had all his spirit and playfulness back. Floating his teeth had turned the trick. I played with him after lunch while the other grooms were setting around

on crumb boxes playing cards. By brushing him and snapping an old towel around his "keester" I found that he was becoming used to being touched around his hindquarters. Cowboy told me that I would be able to lift his rear hooves before long without any trouble. This would be an accomplishment.

During the Kentucky Derby Honeymoon our manage number Emmett Kelly rode into the big top sitting beside a lovely showgirl Ann Mace in a Victoria pulled by King and Pat, two spirited hackney horses. After they pulled into the center ring Emmett would step out of the carriage. But, just as Emmett was stepping out a prop man dropped a bit of rigging, the team reared, lunged forward and ran out of the ring, around the hippodrome track, and out the back door. Kelly and Ann were holding on for dear life.

Tom, the driver, couldn't stop them until they hit the canvas top of the blacksmith shop. Frank, Tex, and I ran over to hold the team and quickly unhitch them. Ann and Kelly were scared to death as we helped them down from the phaeton. For the rest of the season Emmett didn't ride in the Victoria with Ann. He had it.

Doc Henderson and Higgins doctored the cuts on the horses flanks and old Pete took the wagon pole to the truck department repair shop for the end to be welded. Between shows the team was hitched, and driven around the big top and into the center ring until they were good and relaxed. During the evening performance they worked without any trouble. Everyone was watching to see what they would do.

After manege I changed and went inside the show to watch the flyers, tight wire act, and finale. Franz Roberts met me and we took a trolley to town. We stayed out until wee hours of the morning. Cowboy had given me a blanket to use as a shake-down beneath our harness rack when I arrived back at the horse tops. After I had once gone to sleep I didn't wake up until ten a.m. Cowboy had feed my string. I went back to sleep until noon.

June 27, Montreal, Canada. After breakfast I helped Doc Higgins wash the sheath of every gelding and stud on the show. We used a medicat-

ed soap and water and took most of the morning. This cuts down on their getting an infection of the urinary tract.

Harry, the barber, didn't want to cut my hair between shows when his power was off so I waited until seven. He finished just after Jimmy Armstrong blew "first call." Heinz and I walked into the big top after doors and were surprised to see the seats full and people sitting along the hippodrome track. At last we had a Canadian straw house.

During Spec and Manage we had to ride carefully around the track and those who were not riding walked along with the teams of horses puffing the floats. After finale Roberts, Landis, Frenchy, and I went out to a neighborhood tavern for a few glasses of ale. Marion Seifert, Rusty Parent, and a few of the other show girls were there.

June 28, Montreal, Canada. I rolled out of the straw at seven-thirty, feed and water Night Rider, Flash, and Diamond, and went to the cook-house for bacon and eggs. Even after two cups of coffee, I was able to go back and sack in until noon. When I was finally awake and sat out on the Tally-Ho with Doc Higgins and Marion Seifert until "first call." Marion is a fine rider and looks beautiful riding Charlie her dressage horse in the first ring. Robert De Vasconcellos rides in the center ring and his wife in the third ring. His is an excellent dressage rider and very

Otto Griebing, every bodies favorite clown.



demanding about the care of his horses.

Probably because of the large Catholic population the Sunday afternoon house was small. Sundays in French speaking Canada all the houses were light. The matinee seemed more like a dress rehearsal.

Suzanne Higgins insisted that I take her for a piggy back ride around the back yard while we were relaxing after supper of roast chicken, cornbread, and apple pie. When I finished being her horse we joined Heinz and Roberts and watched a prop hand demonstrate his tap dancing skills in the big top. One of his buddies played the mouth organ to accompany him and before long the buskers had an audience of fifty or more people.

The Montreal lot was getting a bit stale or sour and we were all looking forward to one night stands again. Even the horses seemed ready to move on. The groom that took Diamond into liberty dropped his halter in the hay and when we were getting ready for the haul I couldn't find it. I got a bit angry. While working a show and getting ready to move out there wasn't really time for silly mistakes. We finally spotted it under his hay.

All evening there had been flashes of lightning and a cool breeze but we did not expect the storm to break until we had the stock loaded on the train. We were wrong. Half way to the stock cars it opened up and poured. Before they were done with the finale, back on the lot the heavens opened up and poured buckets of cold water down on us. The rain was hard, cold, and wet. Blankets of rain hit us; I couldn't see through the large puddles on my glasses and Rider and Tex were pulling and tugging on their lead ropes. My clothing was wringing wet. Riders all along the line were giving the gods hell with below the belt words but their cussing didn't stop the downpour.

Heinz and I walked to the coach with cold water running down out backs and water oozing out of our shoes. Yum Yum's coffee warmed me up. Before bed I had to wring out my Levis, jacket, and shirt because my clean clothes were in my "crumb box" in Ralph's wagon. I just hoped they would be a little dry in the morning.

June 29, Valleyfield, Canada. Goose pimples tinkled over my

tanned back as I had to slip on my wet shirt, Levis, jacket, socks, and shoes. Fully dressed, I was as wet as on the previous night. I couldn't wait to get to the cookhouse.

At the crossing Mac let me borrow his dry jacket and after breakfast I sat on top of a stock car to let the rays of warm sun hit my damp back. The sunshine felt great. The ride to the lot was not long but I started to have a toothache. Doc Higgins cured it with an application of Sloan's horse lineament and two aspirin tablets.

The grassy green lot was soft, like a matress, and everywhere animal cages, heavy seat wagons, and baggage wagons were sinking deep into the soft field. After the big top was up Deacon and the truck department were finding it impossible to haul the seat wagons into the top and spot them. Cats, trucks, and bulls, were mired down in the mud.

By eleven the big top was raised, the cookhouse had dinner ready, the side show was ready to open but the seat wagons were still crowded here and there around the backyard. An order was given to "blow the show" at eleven-thirty. The advance was small and it was too risky trying to get a matinee on. If we had stayed we would have been mired down in the mud.

All of the setting up that was completed had to be torn down, wardrobe had to be repacked, and equipment had to be hauled back to the train. Immediately, dinner was served, rigging was taken down, the big top fell quietly to the ground and was unlaced, rolled, and lifted into waiting canvas trucks, and hauled back to the crossing.

After the horses were fed and watered, I played with Rider and found that I could lift his rear legs to clean his hoofs without being kicked. This was the accomplishment that I had been waiting for.

The spectators at Valleyfield were watching the circus tear down under

the bring sun rather than under the darkness of night. While I was over visiting a friend working in the bull department. they had their troubles.

Two old bulls started fighting and threatened to cause an elephant riot. Old Ruth was promptly brought between them and stopped the fight. She was the boss elephant.

Newspaper ad for the Belleville, Ontario stand.

At three we rode back to the train, loaded the horses, and waited until five when the First Section was to leave. Doc Higgins, Heinz, Franz, and I walked to town to buy ice cream. The people at the store spoke only French but were they busy waiting on all the circus people.

When our section started to move many of the kinkers climbed aboard to ride down the tracks three miles to where their coaches were spotted. Otto Griebing and Fay Alexander, a flyer who was in the *Greatest Show on Earth* with Betty Hutton rode in our coach.

Otto had been to the tavern and when it came time for him to jump off the coach he fell head first and rolled down the steep cinder bank. He was Otto the clown when he lifted his chubby body up from the cinders and dusted his "keester." Two ballet broads meet him and helped him to the third section. Heinz and I rode on the platform of our car until after dark and talked about his Germany.

June 30, Kingston, Canada. I noticed, while waiting in the show bus after breakfast that iron stakes for the big top were bending into sad forms as the stake driver tried to pound them into the hard rocky ground. As a result it took longer than usual to erect the big top. I thought, well, the matinee will be late today. On the bus I was seated beside "Sea Cow," a chap that was a usher and who one day later in the sixties would become a popular clown.

Because of the hard ground Dutch

gave us three bales of straw for each string so the horses were bedded up to their forearms. When they had all been watered and forgiven a little time to munch on hay, I took Rider out of the tent, tied him to the Tallyho, and gave him a warm bath.

Jim, the "Thousand Dollar Groom," told me that it was the second time in his life when he had seen a black horse given a bath; the other time was in Quebec City when I gave rider a good shampoo and rinse. What can I tell you, I was proud of that horse.

A townner snapped my picture while I was trying to rest before lunch. After the picture was taken she just smiled and walked away. The matinee was a bit late but all went well as usual but it did sprinkle so we all sat in the first horse top to cut up Jack pots. There was lots of talk about the old days on the Hagenbeck-Wallace show and later on the Cole Show with Zack Terrell, Cowboy and Dutch had both been over on those shows. Eddie, Jimmy, Red, and a truck driver from the Deacon's department played a few hands of poker. Frank and Miller played with Murphy the dog. Mac like to talk about his time on the Mills show when he worked with Hugo Schmidt the elephant man.

On the haul that night, Mac a little black shetland pony balked several times stopping all of us.

We waited a minute and then he moved off again. Those little buggers could always be more difficult than the big horses. They did a liberty act in the third ring early in the show and every once in a while one or two of them would jump the ring curb and take off down the hippodrome track.

Heinz, California Red, Mac, and I visited on the platform while the Canadian National engines were switching our train around before we left town. Red was once again comparing the Ringling show, a Sunday school operation, to the Ben Davenport's Dailey show a real old fashioned grift operation.

July 1 Belleville, Canada. Our lot was another large Exposition grounds and we had a handy backyard with plenty of spots to place the wagons, tents, floats, and tractors. After work was done I had an hour to sit under a large maple tree a read



my mail from Aunt Iva and Frances, and write a letter to my Mom. Roberts, my usher friend took our laundry to a Bendix.

Harry the barber, told me that he had been on the show for twenty-three seasons. I finally got to his shop in his little tent while the show was on and he could run his clippers from the power of the electric plants. We were able to listen to a ball game on his portable radio. Old Man Miller dropped in to visit and like any small town barber shop everyone hangs around to talk politics, ball scores, wager bets, and tell a few brawdy stories. The circus barber shop was no exception.

Duffy a young clown, Heinz, Flynn, and the rest to ring stock spent time between shows discussing how high MacArthur, a horse that was once on the show could jump. Tommy, the bus driver was once his rider. Six feet and over two roadster cars someone said. Could it be true, it probably was.

While I was sitting on Pat in the first ring during spec Otto was working to the folks in the blues and doing the tin pan gag and I almost forget to ride out of the ring when my turn came. Otto had a way of mesmerizing the audience and show folks like no other artist. He was and would always be my favorite clown.

As we were taking the horses to the trains someone had covered the race track with huge pieces of metal to protect the surface and when the lead horses saw the dust covered slippery surface then bolted. This only happened to Frank and Doc Higgins who were in the lead. The rest of us crossed the race track to the left of the metal.

July 2, Guelph, Canada. In the morning Heinz and I meet two mothers who had brought their young children to the circus lot early. We were waiting in front of the cook house for it to open and they said that they were leaving for breakfast at home. We kidded them and asked them to invite us to the their homes for breakfast but instead, they wanted to enjoy breakfast at Hotel Ringling. We were sorry, we told them but we didn't have tickets for guests.

Two newspaper reporters who were friends of press agent Frank Braden were visiting the show for a few days and writing articles about circus life for a Chicago paper. Pat Valdo let them dress in wardrobe and ride in spec, appear as clowns in a production number, and live the real circus life from meals in the cook-house to berths on the train. They had a great time and were able to write feature articles on circus life.

That night a few of the grooms got into a water fight before the evening show. With lots of water buckets around it was great fun. Finally, old Ralph complained to Frank our boss and he put a stop to our fun. Well enough, it was almost time for first call for the evening show.



The Green Hornet, wagon number 104, was the commissary and pay wagon.

That night Pat Valdo cut the web number as a storm was on its way and because of the cuts the liberty acts and manage were back to back. We had to hurry to harness and unharness the horses from the liberty acts and saddle and bridle and harness and hitch the horses for the Kentucky Derby manege number. We worked fast and were glad when it was time for the blow off. I only had time for a quick hot dog and cup of black coffee at the back yard grease joint before finale.

On the way to the trains the girth on my saddle broke and I had a hard time sitting astride my mount on the long ride back to the train. Once were had the horses loaded I met my pals and we had a bowl of chile that Yum Yum had cooked. It tasted hot and spicy and almost like back home.

July 3, Oshawa, Canada. The railroad yards were not large enough to

accommodate the circus train in Oshawa therefore we had to unload in a town six miles away and ride the stock from the trains to the lot. It was a long ride with a broken saddle girth.

On the haul Harold, who had a string of rosin backs, lost his cowboy hat and had to jump off to pick it up, he couldn't climb back on his mount while we were moving along so someone shouted ahead to boss man Frank and the line was stopped until Harold had remounted.

Franc Roberts and I met before lunch and decided to visit Buffalo on our free Sunday that was coming up, I knew two girls from Hiram College there and we figured we to could take in a movie and go out dancing. Both of us were anxious to be away from the show for a few hours and sleep in real beds.

Otto Griebing was sitting on a truck at Waxey's harness shop when I called on Waxey to sew my saddle girth. Waxey and Toto had been on the American Circus Corporation shows together in the thirties and on the Cole show. Both men called Peru, Indiana home. I had never been to Peru and wouldn't be there for many years but around circuses someone was always telling a story about back in Peru in the old days. In the good old days.

That afternoon for some reason Sunshine, the horse I rode in spec started to buck as we came out the back door and continued to buck across the backyard to the horse tops. Ride em cowboy someone shouted but I didn't find it funny.

That night I rode Tex to the trains and led Charlotte a gray rosin back. Charlot had been kicked in the leg that day and was a bit lame. Doc Higgins had given her a shot but there was still some swelling in her stifle. Before she was loaded into the stock car we rubbed her leg down with white liniment and wrapped it with cotton and a bandage to keep the swelling down.

July 4, Hamilton Canada. Miller woke us up early as we had to dress and then jump the second section as we were pulling into town. We then had to ride several miles on the flats to the crossing where to stock cars

would be. Heinz and I rode on one of the seat wagon flats.

The lot turned out to be the Hamilton Jockey Club or race track grounds. It was grassy and outside the track were lots of large maple trees. After breakfast I went to the store near the crossing and called my friend in Buffalo. She invited Roberts to stay at her house when we could get to Buffalo.

I was in the harness wagon about ten a.m. helping Ralph hand out saddles when I looked up and saw my folks, Aunt Inez and Uncle Ed, coming across the lot. They had driven up from Clyde, New York for a surprise visit. We visited until lunch and then after lunch they watched me groom my string before the matinee. After the "first call" we went to the grease joint for coffee and Danish and they took pictures of the backyard and all of the activity that there is on a big show.

July 4 is not only a great American holiday but a special day on circuses. At the cook house we had a special meal with all the shrimp you could eat, charcoal broiled steaks, baked potatoes green tossed salad, and apple pie alamode for dessert. American flags were hanging from the center poles of the cookhouse and the tables were decorated in red, white, and blue. After supper everyone went to the big top and gathered in the seats on the front side in front of the center ring. Felix Adler was Ring Master and there were stake driving contests, foot races, a rope climbing contest, as well as pie eating. Bill Ballantine and a clown did an act as sections of a horse. They were imitating Count Robert de Vas Concellos, "the World's Greatest Dressage Rider." Otto Griebing, dressed in shorts, red suspenders, and a blonde wig and performed as Mister Mistin, Jr. will you sing with me please, was his gag line. The big top echoed with laughter when he said, "Will you sing with me please?" Otto's deep gravelly voice was a sharp contrast to the high pitched voice of the child star. The high light of the show however was when a tall slender black worker from the cookhouse called "cookhouse Fay" entered the ring dressed in drag as a trapeze

artist and did a take off of lovely Pineto Del Lora. She stole the show. Circus people are proud of their acts but not above taking a friendly ribbing on the July 4 holiday. All the working men, performers, and top brass on the show had a great time filled with laughter. The party ended when we were all served ice cream sandwiches sent over from the cookhouse.

After the party we lined up at the Green Hornet and were paid our weekly wages, minus our draws for the last time in Canadian dollars. Our July 4 came to an end by playing to a straw house that night and even a full back yard of spectators. On the hippodrome track there was hardly room for us to ride around the hippodrome as the crowd laughed, and cheered. It was a great circus day that I would remember always.

July 5, St. Catherines, Canada. A groom named Carl agreed, for a small fee, to care for my string of horses over night and Roberts and I left for Buffalo early in the afternoon. We were able to hitch there in two hours which wasn't bad.

In Buffalo we met our dates, enjoyed a spaghetti dinner at an Italian restaurant and went to see a movie at Shea's Theatre. A movie house that was one of the most ornate and beautiful of the old vaudeville houses. It was there that vaudeville star Sophie Tucker first

Deafy, the blacksmith on the big show in 1953.



introduced *Waiting for the Robert E. Lee*, a spirited rag time song popular early in the century. That was a real treat. After the movie we took the girls out dancing and for a few beers.

When we left our dates we counted our combined funds and discovered that we had only four dollars and ten cents between us. The four bucks we used for a cheap hotel room and we saved the ten cents to pay our toll across the Peace Bridge back into Canada. Before bed I soaked in the bath tub enjoying every minute of the hot water.

July 6 St. Catherines, Canada. We were awake at nine and left out hotel for Canada at ten, we couldn't buy a breakfast so were forced to travel on empty stomachs.

Once we had paid the dime toll and walked across the bridge we started to hitch. Two hours later we were still trying for our first ride, however, at this time we were thumbing in a sudden cloud burst. Roberts still kids me about being so discouraged that I contemplated giving up the circus business and heading home. At last a Mormon missionary, God bless him, picked us up and took us directly to St. Catherines and the circus lot. We were just in time for the matinee. Frank laughed when he heard our story.

He told us never mind about making the performance but to be damn sure that we were on the train when it pulled out of town. We went to the Green Hornet made a draw and went to town for a movie at the local air-conditioned theater.

July 7, Brantford, Canada. In Brantford we played a small lot with not enough space for a "mud show." We didn't even have enough space to hitch the team to the Tally-Ho for manage. The horse tops were end to end to make more confusion, especially when we were bringing out the three liberty acts with thirty-six horses.

Heinz created a sensation when he put a brush on the bottom of the belly of Duke, a young King Ranch stallion. He had been playing with himself so much that he was getting skinny and difficult. The ballet girls heard about it from Marion Siefert that that evening Hamburger Mary

presented Heinz with a small brush for his tummy. He laughed and assured her that he didn't need it but as he rode into the center ring, luring the Kentucky Derby number the ring hands gave him quite a kidding.

Deafy, the blacksmith paid me fifty cents or cherry pie for helping him tear down the blacksmith top and loading his equipment into the wagon. Smitty, his partner, was in a crap game with the colored big top crew so he was short of help. Smitty came back later and the George Warner crew had cleaned him out.

Doc Higgins, Mrs. Higgins, Suzanne, and I sat in their wagon and talked about Johnny North and wondered why he didn't spend more time on the show. We all thought that if we owned the show we would be there living in our private railroad car the Jomar and on the lot each day. Not

Johnny North, he was usually in Europe or Sarasota, or his apartment at the Waldorf Towers in New York. Most of the summer, however, his brother Henry or "Buddy" was on the show.

Henry was liked by everyone on the lot and was kind and respectful to the artists and workmen alike.

Often he would come visit the horse tops and visit with Frank Selock and the vets and once in a while he would ask Frank if he could take old Frenchy the groom down town for a few games of billiards.

July 8, London, Canada. The lot was short again and the way twenty-four hour man Willie Carr laid it out the horse tents were spotted directly behind the side show or "kid show" as we called it.

Over and over again we could hear Dick Slayton, the side show manager and talker asking everyone to come on in and see Fredia Pushnik, the armless and leg less girl, Sealo, the seal boy,

Betty Broadbent the tattooed lady, Harry and his magic and Punch and Judy show, and of course Ricky Ricardo the sword swoller swords and a neon light bulb.

Old man Miller was surprised to see that I was cleaning Rider's rear hoofs and currying his hindquarters without any trouble from the horse. He and I were get-

ting along just fine.

He was a great finish horse for the center ring liberty act and on cue from Charlie Morowski he would rear up on his hind legs and walk back towards the ring curb and then jump forward as Charlie moved backwards. Night Rider was a real show horse. I often wondered where he was raised and how he was bred. To me he looked like a cross between saddle bred and quarter horse.

Otto Griebing and Emmett Kelly hit and chased golf balls around the backyard before the matinee, they were fully made-up in the tramp costumes and one would think that two tramps had just jumped off a freight train with their gold clubs and were out at a fancy golf club cutting a business deal. They were funny guys indeed.

Ma Higgins and Doc were handing out laundry after she came back from the Bendix. Suzanne and Joyce played tag with Chuck and I after supper and then we all went into the big top to watch an old clown Walter Guice work with some of the riding act girls helping them to improve their riding act. Walter had been a center ring performer with riding act with his wife Flora Bendini with many riding acts over the years and he was always in the big top between shows helping young performers. He was one of the kindest gentlemen on the show. Some of the old clowns were a big cranky but not Walter.

July 9 Windsor, Canada. Here we were just across the river from Detroit. A deep ditch separated the railroad area where we unloaded from the road that led to the lot. As a result we had to mount our lead horses and jump our string across this ditch. I rode Tex up to the ditch and was leading Charlot on my left

Mr. Barnum, the automatic dish washer in the cookhouse.



and Rider on my right when suddenly Rider leaped over the ditch

followed by Tex and Charlot. Rider jumped just before Tex and the tug from his lunge pulled the lead-rope through my hand. My palm was burned from the rope and my wrist was sprained.

Luckily I stayed on Tex and didn't lose my seat.

Before lunch Frank told us to go up and report to the immigration tent. I fell in line with Priscilla, the bearded lady and her husband Emmett, the Alligator Boy, and Ted Evans the giant.

When the officials gave us the okay they rubber-stamped our arms. Doc Higgins kidded me about my circus tattoo.

The Windsor City Engineer talked with me while I was waiting in line to take Pat and Sunfire in for liberty. He was enjoying his afternoon watching the show from the back door. He liked horses so we had a lot to talk about. He was really surprised in what good shape the horses were

in considering all the traveling they did each season. He quickly reached the conclusion that stock on the Ringling show worked right along with the performers and were given the best of care. He was right.

After supper Frank, Beans, Jimmy, Eddie, Miller, Dutch, Joyce, Suzanne, and I played catch with a rubber ball while Murphy our dog ran from tosser to catcher eyeing the little red toy.

When one of us dropped the ball he would run with it and hide under Ralph's harness wagon.

When we were tired and thirsty Roberts and I walked down the street to a ma and pop store for cokes.

On the haul to the train that night one of the truck drivers, who was hauling four wagons behind his truck sailed past our line of horses and the noise of the trailer hitches and chains scared the horses. They were excited and up on the bit for the rest of the way to the cars. My string was just prancing down the road past the lines of spectators on each side of the street.

Before the Immigration Officials from the US went throughout the coaches checking our stamp marks. They also searched the flats for any stowaways. We had a

long seven mile haul to the USA and Detroit. All of us were happy to be going back home to the old USA.

July 10, Detroit, Michigan. We were lucky again, the circus grounds were next to the railroad siding which made it convenient for everyone. We walked from the cars to the cookhouse and after breakfast Heinz and I walked to the back of the lot where we could watch George Warner. Bing his assistant, and the big top crew spot the giant poles, unroll the canvas and stretch and lace the huge sections together, and finally tie the guy ropes to the stakes. Head usher, Pete Grace was busy working the punks as they helped spread the canvas. That day there were lots of kids who wanted to earn a ticket to the circus.

Doc Hall and two other twenty-four hour men were busy showing local wholesalers where to unload hay, straw, sawdust, wooden cases of Coke, groceries, and other supplies that the show had ordered. Until I saw all the trucks with loads of merchandise arriving on the lot, I never realized how much the show purchased in the towns that we played.

Doc Henderson had once told me that the "nut" or daily expenses of the show averaged \$20,000 per day. This included the nightly railroad jump which was always paid to the railroad in cash each and every night.

The bear act didn't work the matinee because their trainer, Albert Rix, had been detained by immigration. By evening Mr. Siegel, the Ringling immigration attorney had him back in America and working.

Frank and I walked around the lot after the evening show and then went to a little diner down the street for hot roast beef sandwiches and a cold beers. When we went back to the coaches a Detroit circus fan was showing movies of the 1952 season outside the cars.

After the films, we strolled around the lot until about one-thirty and I couldn't help but notice the quiet atmosphere that engulfed the circus. You could only hear the rustle of the ring stock horses and strange animal sounds from the menagerie tent. Even most of the Cummings generators were down for the night.

Only one power plant was keeping a few security light aglow. The summer air was still, people were not running around the back yard, the colorful floats were covered with drab canvas, wagons were closed, and the big top did not echo with the laughter of an audience. All the animals were getting a good nights rest.

July 11, Detroit, Michigan. The show lot was again a busy world before the morning sun was completely visible. Men at the cookhouse were preparing French toast for breakfast, water trucks were returning to the lot with fresh tanks of water. Deafy the blacksmith was heating up his charcoals to form more horse shoes, and the canvas crew were walking around the big top tightening the guy ropes. I was looking forward to a fun day working for the circus when I left my sleeper Nebraska and headed to the cookhouse for a large breakfast of French toast and bacon, followed by a bowl of Wheaties.

It was really a great day because Bill Webster, the paymaster at the Green Hornet paid us in American money, the first that I had seen since we left Lewiston, Maine, for the Canadian tour. Before the morning was over old Pete had found a bottle store and was well "guyed out" on a bottle of cheap red wine. Frank made him go to his wagon to sleep it off and told him that he better be ready for the matinee. Murphy, our little mascot dog, realized that his old pal Pete had tied one on and the dog would

Elsie Jung and husband Paul.



not go near the old man. That matinee, after manege, when Tex and Flynn were unhitching the team of hackney horses from the Victoria King, the near horse of the pair, jumped forward and almost trampled Flynn. The wagon pole knocked the wind out of Flynn but he was revived when Dr. Roberts gave him a whiff of smelling salts. He didn't have any broken bones but his rib cage was sore for the next few days. I went shopping between shows with Dr. Robert's son Franz, he purchased a new pair of work shoes. I found a circus book with some action shots of the liberty horses at work in the big top. Before long, I was back on the lot wiping down, saddling and harnessing horses for the evening show. Old Ralph, of pad wagon fame, was visited by his former wife and seemed in great spirits. As I walked out of the backdoor after the evening finale, I heard a commotion near the grease joint and realized that Flynn was slugging it out with one of the razor-backs from the train crew. When Flynn knocked him out cold, I tossed a bucket of water on the guy. The pleasure was all mine. We then sent him on his way back to the train before he got into more trouble. To top the day off Roberts, Chuck, California Red, and I went down the street to a bar where there was country music and some rock and roll. We ordered ourselves a few mugs of beer, did and little dancing with local girls, and then paid four dollars for a taxi to take us back to the train. Chuck didn't join us as he had found himself a date for the night.

We all wondered how old Chuck could be so lucky.

July 12, Detroit. By seven I had feed and watered my string, picked up their bedding, and rolled up the side-wall along the picket line. I then sat out on a tack trunk resting and enjoying the morning sun. It was going to be a hot July day. Doc Higgins came along and visited with me before he and the family left for church. A bull man Duffy brought old Harold, the elephant department's horse, over to Deafy to have him shod so I went over to the blacksmith shop to watch and cut up jackpots. Harold was in several scenes of the movie *Greatest Show on Earth*. I later learned that the shows General

Agent, Paul Eagles, had originally purchased the horse in California years ago to be the bull horse on the Al G. Barnes Circus. At present he was ridden by Arky Scott, superintendent of elephants, and a veteran of the Cole Show.

Mr. and Mrs. Carew, circus fans and photographers from Detroit snapped my picture while I was playing at the blacksmith's forge. A few weeks later prints of the picture arrived and I have kept them for all these many years. On the road, I learned that you meet wonderful and kind people and they usually visit the show year after year to renew friendships.

After a stay in Detroit we were ready to move on. As we road to the trains Roy, a stubborn palomino, jumped and tossed his groom. They were in line just in front of me and I always had to be careful as Roy was known to kick back at horses behind him. He was an animal that could not be trusted. Flynn and Willy came by the coaches that night to tell us that they were "blowing the show" to return to Boston. They said they missed the Red Socks and the games at Fenway Park. After a good bye that walked off into the darkness and we never did see them again. On the road, you work with people, make friends, and suddenly they leave and sometimes you never see them again. As a small town guy I was not use to that experience and I always felt a void when a friend left the show. I was beginning to realize that I liked to be on the road playing spots and not working in one town day after day. I had "sawdust in my shoes" as the old timers would say.

July 13, Toledo, Ohio. Jim, the thousand dollar groom, as we called him, and I were up early and sat out on the tracks drinking hot coffee. A young woman and her boyfriend started a conversation with us, she had been to the lot and was full of questions after seeing the cookhouse workers setting up the cookhouse and the cooks, bakers, and all the staff rushing to prepare breakfast and get the flag up. She even saw

"Mr. Barnum," the huge dishwasher in operation. She kept Jim and I busy answering questions until it was time to take the bus to the lot. How many do they feed each meal, do they do the baking right on the lot, how are the meals, what is you favorite meal, do you have waiters or is it cafeteria style? She went on and on with questions. Finally we asked her a few questions only to discover that she was a local home economics teacher.

Early in the afternoon a cowboy character drove an eight-horse pony hitch onto the lot and Miller nearly died laughing when the teamster tried to turn the hitch around. He let the lead ponies step over the traces and ended up climbing down from the pony wagon to untangle the lead team. "Waxey" had made the pony harness years ago when he worked on the Cole show for Zack Terrell. "Waxey" was proud of the harness with all the brass fixtures and fancy stitching. On the bridle blinders he had imprinted CBS for Cole Bros. Circus.. For the rest of the afternoon "Waxey" entertained us with stories about the great horses that Mr. Terrell trouped with Cole Bros. Circus, he loved American saddlebreds.

Pat Valdo, the performance director, let a circus fan ride in my spot in spec and I rode next to a groom named Sleepy. Once we had ridden around the hippodrome track we entered the first ring and I was able to see the spec from a different angle. I especially liked to watch the "Show

Boat" and the "Old Woman in the Shoe" floats pass by as I sat on my horse in the ring. Carl, a short clown, rode the boat float dressed as Mark Twain and, elderly clown, Arthur Burson played the old lady while wearing a large blue dress, hat and carrying a rolling pin.. A giant who had once been with the show visited in the afternoon, he had been in The Greatest Show on Earth, and had lots of friends on the lot. His real pals were, however in the kid show, especially Harry, Gracie, Daisy, and Tiny Doll Freida Pushnik, the armless and legless girl. After my horses were feed, I walked down the street to a gas station to call home. I wanted to see if I could stay on the show for a few more weeks and go back to college later but, unhappily, I learned that I would have to return to Hiram College in a few days. I had a talk with Doc Higgins after returning to the lot and he assured me that returning to college would be best. I could always join out after finishing school.

During the opening display that night a dog act worked the first ring, chimps the center ring, and eight black Shetland ponies did a liberty act in the third ring. Suddenly, while their trainer was cracking his whip and cueing the ponies to reverse three of the ponies jumped the ring curb and started galloping down the track. Three grooms and several ushers took off after them and finally caught them in front of the center ring. Under the guidance of their grooms that pranced back to the horse tops. Frank Selock told their

trainer that between shows for a few days they would have to be worked to get them under control and that it would be best to cut their grain. They were feeling too frisky. Frank kidded Pat Valdo by suggesting that pony races be added to the opening of the show. Pat said he would consider it for the next season.

July 14, Lima, Ohio. Chuck, Carl, and I took a break after the

A side show opening in 1953.



horses were fed in the morning and went swimming in a large pond near the lot. On this hot day the water was refreshing. When I got back to the lot, I could see old man Miller waiting at the horse tops for me. I could tell that he had a message for me. When I opened the yellow telegram envelope, I knew in my heart that I was going to have to "blow the show" like my friends from Boston, a few days earlier. It was back to college for me and no "sawdust and spangles."

I gave Doc Higgins the news and we tried to figure out how I might be able to stay on but we both decided that it would be best for me to finish my education. I realized what a good man Doc Higgins was when he suggested that I go back to the horse tops, sit down on a bale of straw near my horses, just think it over and that God would let me know that I was making a tough but right decision. I didn't enjoy my cookhouse lunch of meat loaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, and salad but by supper time I was feeling better. Franz Roberts and I went down the street to a little tavern and had two fish bowls of beer before going back for the night show. I harnessed the liberty horses and saddled up for spec. During spec I was mounted on Sunfire in the third ring and when the "School House" float passed by and the band was playing School Days Jimmy looked over at me and said, "Their playing that for you Billy the Kid."

When I went to the grease joint that night for coffee, Red a grill man, asked me if I had bad news. When I asked, how did he know he said "Well Higgins, Jr. I could tell when you were over here for a Coke this afternoon. You just didn't have your usual smile." I told him about the telegram from my Mom and that I would be leaving the next day after we played Dayton. That night I enjoyed one of Yum Yum's hamburgers and then went outside to visit with my friend Heinz before heading off to my bunk for the last time. I rolled and tossed all night thinking about leaving my new friends, the horses that I cared for, what it would be like away from the circus. How I was going to miss Frank, Miller, Dutch, Cowboy, Elsie Jung,, Marion Seifert, Heinz, Frank



The four ticket wagons at the entrance to a 1953 Ringling-Barnum midway.

Roberts, and Doc and Mrs. Higgins.

These thoughts were on my mind as the First Section pulled out of the Lima, Ohio railroad yards for Dayton.

July 15, Dayton, Ohio. The circus lot was the Montgomery County Fairgrounds, right in the heart of the city of Dayton. We were able to walk from the train to the lot after our section was spotted. The fairgrounds infield was grassy but there was one large shade tree plum in the middle of the backyard. The show looked at its best and most colorful here. Dayton's National Cash Register Company buildings were right across the street from the back end of the lot and workers were able to glance out of their windows to watch the circus activities all that day.

After my horses were feed and watered, I walked over to a Mom & Pop grocery store to use a pay phone to call a college friend, Donald Wheat and invite him and friends to the circus. I also made arrangements to stay at his home that night before I took a bus back to Hiram, Ohio and school.

I worked the matinee, enjoyed my ride in spec and thought about what it would be like after leaving the show. I knew I was going to miss hearing the circus band spec music, and riding along the hippodrome track waving at all the children in the seats. After my horse was back at the stable, I went over to the grease joint to meet Heinz and Franz for a cold Coke.

That afternoon Doc Higgins met me as I was waiting to take my hors-

es in for liberty. He said, "what's up, Bill?" I told him that I would be leaving that night after the horses were loaded, "Oh, hell," he replied. As we were kneeling by the center ring curb watching the horses work the act he flicked his whip at me and smiled, as if to tell me that all would be well. I managed a faint smile.

Before Kentucky Derby Honeymoon, manage number, I rode Greyhound around the back yard and waited for Elsie Jung to come for her horse. As I helped Elsie mount her horse she told me to go back to college and pull straight As. To me, Elsie was the most beautiful circus lady in the world. She could do trapeze, aerial ballet, and was an excellent equestrian. She was all circus and I knew that I was happy to have her for a friend and that I would miss her in a few days.

After my last meal in the cookhouse Doc and Mrs. Higgins, Suzanne, Franz, Heinz and I sat in front of the Higgins wagon and talked about their plans for the Chicago stand and the West Coast dates. I wanted to go with them and play Soldiers Field in Chicago and then go on to the West Coast but it was not to be.

For me, the 1953 season will never end. The "big one," with all my friends, human and equine, will always be out there day after day working, performing, traveling and making "Children of all Ages" happy, if even for a few hours. I know it is out there, I can close my eyes and see it, hear the music, sounds, applause and I'll always be there to take care of my Night Rider, Flash, and Diamond. My summer of 1953 will never end, I wouldn't let it end, in my mind the red wagons are still rolling.

The Castelllos, A Family of Famous Riders

By John Daniel Draper

Dan Castello (1832-1909) was a prominent personage of the 19th century American Circus. One of his great achievements was his part in the framing in the winter of 1870-1871 of the original P. T. Barnum Circus at Delavan, Wisconsin. He is not to be confused with Dan Costello (1836-1901), a noted Barnum & Forepaugh clown. Please note the difference in the spelling of the surname. Prior to severing his business association with the Barnum Show in 1875, Dan Castello had shown a sincere interest in tutoring aspiring youngsters in the basic skills of standing riding.

One of those persons who became his apprentice was David Loughlin (1860-1922), a native of Norfolk, Virginia. He was a youth with outstanding ability but no previous circus connections. Infatuated with circuses in general, David had soon become interested in riding. Under



Dave Castello, Sr.
Circus World Museum
collection.

Castello's supervision, Loughlin was performing as a rider on P. T. Barnum as early as 1871. In tribute to his teacher and friend, Loughlin and his descendants took the professional name of Castello although for other purposes they were to retain their family name. Incidentally, Daisy Belmont was another young rider whom Castello developed into a star performer. In 1873 Master Davey at the age of thirteen was executing

daring riding without saddle or bridle. He also did somersault riding and an Indian riding act and appeared in a comic scene entitled "Jockey & Trainer." Philo Nathans played the part of the trainer, Dave was the jockey and W. Aymar was the hostler and tormentor.

David Castello's mentor, Dan Castello, remained on P. T. Barnum as manager of the hippodrome through 1875. After the 1874 season David went over to Howes & Cushing and also to Carrington's Great Southern Circus. In 1876 he was under contract with the Great European Circus and at the end of that season returned to his mother's home for the winter months. In July of the next year he was back on P. T.

Barnum in Chicago riding his pony in the "Red Man of the Prairie Act," accompanied by the antics of Miaco, the clown. In February of 1878 when he advertised as being at liberty, he listed his specialties as principal bareback and hurdle rider, Indian act rider and tumbler. When Chiarini's Circus played San Francisco in 1879, David Castello was there, presenting his great pirouette riding routine. In November of 1881, David Castello was performing on the boat show, Cole's New Great Southern Circus, Menagerie, Museum and Triple Musical Congress. The proprietors were Matt Leland, William Monroe and George S. Cole.

The following year he was a rider and the equestrian director on Cooper, Jackson & Co's New Gigantic Railroad Show, quartered at St. Louis. In the fall of that year he married nineteen year old Ada Wallett, the member of a famous English circus family. She



Mrs. Ada Castello on Ringling Bros.
in 1889. Pfening Archives.

was a native of Birmingham. Ada was one of several young women who performed the "Zazel" act, popular from 1877 through the early 1880's, first at the Westminster Aquarium in England and later in the United States on P. T. Barnum (1878), J. B. Doris Inter Ocean Show (1883) and on others. The act consisted of a young lady's being shot from the mouth of a huge cannon suspended in mid-air. The performer in question was ejected by the force of a very large rubber spring which was under great tension. The distance of propulsion for this human projectile ranged from thirty feet to approximately ninety seven feet. The young lady either landed in a net or caught a suspended trapeze bar. Women performing this act were usually called Zazel. Famous "Zazels" other than Ada Wallett were Rosa M. Richter, Mrs. George Starr, wife of Barnum's well known traveling agent and manager, and Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Roche (1863-1885). Interestingly enough, all of these young ladies, like Ada, were natives of England, the land

where the act had originated. The *Wisconsin State Journal* for July 1, 1880 had this account concerning a "Zazel," then appearing on the P. T. Barnum show: "Daring aerial dive, afterwards shot out of a cannon, shows most wonderful nerve in her peculiar act; although comparatively free from danger is calculated to thrill an audience more than anything else of its kind ever exhibited. The beauty of the performer gives her a peculiar interest to susceptible young men."

After their marriage, Dave introduced his wife to the skills and art of bareback riding. In 1885 and 1886 the Four Castellos, Dave & his wife and two of his brothers, George and Willie, rode on the W. H. Harris Circus. In 1882 Dan Castello had met William H. Harris and he agreed to organize and manage a circus with Harris' financial backing. The result in 1883 was the W. H. Harris & Dan Castello's New United Monster Nickel Plate Show, Circus, Museum & Menagerie. In 1884 and 1885 Dan Castello was equestrian director of W. H. Harris Nickel Plate Circus. Dave Castello became equestrian director of the Show in 1887 and on July 24th of that year he was honored by being presented a gold watch and chain for his services. In February of 1888 the Castello Family was on Donovans Show in South America. By June of 1890 David was back with W. H. Harris Nickel Plate riding his wonderful bareback hurdle act. When Uncle Dan Castello was a visitor that season during the Chicago dates, for several nights he assumed his old position in the ring as equestrian director. The next year found the Castellos on Adam Forepaugh. David was a principal rider and Ada, featured as "Zazel," did a fire jump riding act. By

November of 1893 Castello and his family were signed with Pubillones to go to Cuba for the winter. They left that show on January 27, 1894, joined the Cortado Show on the 28th and then sailed for the United States at the end of March. Early in 1894 Dave was breaking four ring horses



The Riding Castellos in 1918. Left to right, Ed Walton; Pearl (wife of Dave Jr.); Dave Jr.; Edith Walton and Dave Sr. Pfening Archives.

and preparing a new horse for the finish portion of his principal riding act. That year he was equestrian director and principal somersault rider on Bob Hunting's Circus where he rode his faithful horse, "Prince." Ada was also a principal rider and together they did a grand 2 horse carrying act.

In May of 1894 David Castello's mother, Mrs. Lucy A. Loughlin, died at the age of 56 at her home in Virginia. She was a native of Lawrenceville, Brunswick County, Virginia. In addition to Dave, sons Charles M. (eldest), George, William Thomas, Harry and A. E. (the youngest) survived. William Thomas Loughlin later died in August 1897 as the result of an accident on the aerial bars on Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. Circus. He was about 30 years of age. Together with brothers George and Elmo, William had been on Sells Brothers in Australia in 1891-1892 and in an aerial horizontal bar and brother act on the Sells Bros. regular season of 1892. Later, George and Harry were killed in an accident while performing on Sells Bros. Circus. None of these brothers had ever done much circus riding.

Continuing on Bob Hunting's Circus in 1895, both Dave and Ada were bareback riders and, in addition, he served as equestrian direc-

tor. They also had important parade responsibilities on that show. David was the parade marshal and Ada presented a two horse tandem combination. Two years later, David was back on the Donovan show and in 1899 both he and his wife were riders on Ringling Bros. In one of the four manege acts, Ada rode the bucking, jumping, high kicking and perpendicular walking horse, "Jupiter." Much later, in referring to his mother's riding this white Arabian stallion when reared up on his hind legs, her son, Edward Castello, had

this to say: "This picture shows my mother riding one of the best performing horses I've ever seen. That horse was a killer and he played havoc with anybody who tried to ride him. He raised himself on his hind feet continuously, so finally Father got the idea to train him to walk that way. You've seen plenty of circus horses do the, same thing, but invariably they stagger forward. This horse was the only animal I've ever seen which could walk across a ring-curb on his hind feet, with my mother sitting on his back. She was not scared of anything--my mother wasn't, and Dad had the reputation of being the greatest all-around performer in the show business. He could do practically everything. The rest of the family--Dave and his wife, Charlie, Edith, Fred and his wife and I fell naturally into show business."¹

In 1900 Dave Castello, Sr. retired from the circus to Henderson, North Carolina, which had been his home for some years after moving from Cortland, New York. He bought a hotel in Henderson and planned to settle down there to raise his family of five children--Fred, Dave, Jr., Charles, Edward and Edith. As we shall see later, all of these individuals became prominent riders except Charles who excelled as an aerialist.

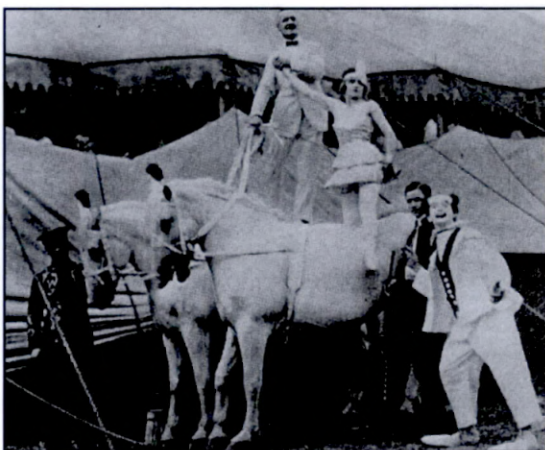
Because of a tragic accident on April 12, 1902, Dave, Sr. was never able to ride again. On returning from a National Guard encampment at Ft. Caswell, he left the train at the set-

tlement of Hamlet, North Carolina to get a sandwich. On attempting to reboard the train, which was then in motion, he slipped under the wheels of a passenger coach and two of his toes on his left foot were cut off. He also lost his right leg below the knee. In June of that same year, his old friend, Dan Castello was said to be dying of pneumonia. However, Dan survived and lived until 1909. Dave Castello quickly recovered from his traumatic ordeal and by 1905 he was the co-owner of the Castello & Graves Circus, which had winter quarters at Cortland, New York.

Ada continued to ride for about a dozen years after her husband's retirement, usually with her son, David, Jr. Both David, Jr. and Fred debuted as riders on Sig Sautelle in 1904. In 1905 the two Castelllos had a double jockey act on the family show. However, the senior Castello's efforts as a proprietor did not succeed. His circus went into bankruptcy and both he and his partner sustained heavy financial losses.

Next, we find Ada on the Mackay European Circus in 1906 as a premiere equestrienne and her son, Charles, was performing there as a human fly. During the seasons of 1908 & 1909 Ada and Dave Jr. appeared on Norris & Rowe as bareback somersault riders. Other bareback, jockey or manege riders for the 1908 season were Rose Dockrill, Frank & Dolly Miller, Horace & Adelaide Webb, George Holland, Fred Castello and Austin King. For 1909 George Holland and Dave Castello, Jr. rode principal acts in Rings 1 and 2. In Display 17 the Castelllos, with their animated poses and performances on unbridled horses, rode opposite the Rose Dockrill and George Holland duo.

The year 1909 was a disastrous, one for Norris & Rowe as it toured far east of its usual territory along the Pacific Coast. It closed at Evansville, Indiana where it wintered for 1909-1910. A storm at Princeton, Indiana, five days before its closing, almost demolished it. On taking the show into winter quarters in Indiana, Mr. Rowe was completely out of funds. It was so heavily mortgaged that no more money could be



On the horse Dave Castello, Sr.; Irene Montgomery and clown Walter Goodenough. Hagenback-Wallace in 1920. Circus World Museum collection.

borrowed on the property. Manager Walter Shannon borrowed enough money on some of his real estate to winter it and get it out in the spring of 1910. However, business was bad, creditors soon closed in and it was forced to close permanently in Newport, Kentucky on May 9th. Norris & Rowe was a good sized circus with a big top of 150 round plus 3-50's. The 14 cage menagerie was housed in an 80 plus 3-30's and the side show was in a 70 plus 2-30's.

Charles Loughlin Castello wrote in February of 1910: "The Castelllos and Will Walleth, English equestrian, are busily engaged at the ring barn in Henderson, North Carolina in practice for the tent season. Dave, Sr. recently purchased in New York some new ring stock on which he is working. Charles Castello recently underwent the fourth successful surgical operation in County Hospital, Denver for injuries sustained in an accident some years ago."² Meanwhile the Castello Family, consisting of Ada, daughter, Edith, and Dave, Jr., appeared in 1910 on Frank Robbins Circus. Edith did a beautiful principal act and Dave served as equestrian director in addition to riding with his mother.

The next season Ada rode "Sceptre" in Display 7 on Dan Robinson's show opposite Norma Davenport (Mrs. Albert Davenport). In addition, the Albert Davenports and the Castelllos presented their riding acts in Display 16 and Dave served as assistant equestrian direc-

tor. Earlier that spring Charles Castello had left to join Sangers show at Brenham, Texas. Beginning in 1912 Ada was on Downie & Wheeler where she lost a valuable ring horse to lockjaw. She was forced to break another one as she later joined Ringling Bros., where she and Dave, Jr. performed in a pas de deux carrying act. After this season there is no further reference to Ada's performing in the circus ring. In 1912 the Alpine Family of high wire artists were also on Ringling Bros. Dave met

Pearl Alpine (1888-1978) of that family, they fell in love and were married soon thereafter. He lost no time in teaching Pearl to ride and she was to become a very graceful principal rider.

David Castello, Sr. lived until October 16, 1922 when he died at age 62 at his home on Spring Street in Henderson, North Carolina. Ada died on October 15, 1929, also in Henderson. She had been a troupier all her life until age forced her to retire.

Over the years the Castello riders worked in various combinations. The eldest son, Fred, rode a bareback jockey act on Campbell Bros. in 1907 and on Norris & Rowe in 1908. On December 22, 1908 he married Bessie Gregory (1888-1963), the older of two cousins with the very same name. She was the daughter of John and Mary Brown Shelton of Ottawa, Ontario. These cousins were members of the Gregory Acrobatic Troupe (1896-1908). This troupe was headed by her uncle who had taken the professional name of Gregory. The girls were performing in a double trapeze act, Fred soon taught his young bride the art of bareback riding including the principal act as well as bounding jockey riding and the carrying act. From 1911 through 1914 they appeared on Yankee Robinson executing all the above feats in addition to a manege presentation. In 1911 Fred was also the assistant equestrian director. Two years later Fred became equestrian director after equestrian director Charles Sweeney's left eye was injured and his back seriously hurt by a falling pole when a cyclone hit the show at Albia, Iowa on the after-

noon of September 5th. By the year 1915 Fred and Bessie were doing jockey riding and a carrying act on Welch Bros. In addition Fred did a bareback somersault act and Bessie had her own principal riding act. The next year this pair appeared on Wheeler Bros. where Fred was equestrian director. In May of 1917 they went to Sparks Circus where they replaced the Crandalls as riders in classy principal and carrying acts. Bessie rode her principal act opposite Eunice De Mott. In the off season that fall Fred, in serving as a fire department member, fell from a fire truck in Henderson and was fatally injured.

For the 1918 season the widowed Bessie Castello and her sister-in-law, Edith Castello, were with the McCree-Davenport Troupe on Ringling Bros. Circus. Bessie and Edith Castello and Lulu Davenport were the originators of a classic rube riding act. Their capering antics were a veneer over the really hazardous bareback feats they performed. "They didn't make them any wilder than these girls as far as wild riding was concerned." This act was a bigger scream than ever.

Dave and Pearl Castello were also there with their extraordinary equestrianism. Also in the introductory spec, "In Days of Old," Dave appeared as the noble prince and knight rescuing his lady fair. The masterful manner in which he snatched the princess from her abductors gave a glimpse of the riding ability he was to portray later. In that fall of 1918 Bessie again teamed with Lulu Davenport and Edith in the wild riding rube act, this time as the Riding Estrellas. This combination, along with Ed Walton, joined Santos y Artigas in Cuba in November.

Walton (1890-1932) had broken in early with the cavalry on Buffalo Bill's Wild West and served as an orderly to Buffalo Bill. Later, in 1911 he joined Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. as a clown. It was here that he met and married Edith Castello who was there riding with her brother, Dave, Jr. In the two previous years she had been on John Robinson's (1909) and Frank A. Robbins (1910). By 1912-1913 Edith was a very

accomplished principal rider on Ringling Bros. In the latter year, with her brother, Dave, Jr., she was doing a double riding act in addition to her principal act.

Dave also did a principal act. Their contract called for a salary of \$125 per week for which, in addition to performing, they both had to go into the spec and tournament as well as the daily street parade. They furnished their own horses.

In the spring of 1914 the Castello Family with Dave, Jr. and Edith was presenting a new vaudeville act which introduced three horses and their riders in the ring at the same time, an innovation in classy equestrianism. Continuing the regular circus season on Wheeler Bros., Edith in her principal act with the Castelllos was making the hit of her life. By 1916 her husband, Ed Walton, had learned the equestrian routines and in that year he and Edith appeared on Barnum & Bailey in Madison Square Garden in a comical burlesque riding number opposite another comedy act, Mile Spangeletta and Mr. Petram. Also for part of the season Edith, in place of Ella Bradna, rode in a carrying number with Fred Derrick. In 1917 Edith and Ed Walton had been on John Robinson's Circus with Dave and Pearl Castello. Dave and Ed were also 2 of 18 riders in the Garland Entry. Edith was active in the Red Cross movement that year during the war. It was at that time that tragedy struck with the loss of the Waltons' infant.

After the Estrellas date with Santos y Artigas in 1918, that troupe went on to Panama before returning to the United States to join the new Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows. Lulu Davenport, Edith and Bessie with Ed Walton appeared as the Riding Waltons. That fall the equestrian acts of Edith Castello and Ed Walton were placed in South America by the Charles L. Sasse Agency. Their winter dates continued with Santos y Artigas in 1920-1921. In the meanwhile for the regular seasons they were again on



Orrin Davenport's riding act on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1924. Bess Castello is in the center. Pfening Archives.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1920 and on Walter L. Main in 1921.

Returning for the moment to the career of Bessie Castello, we find that she joined the Orrin Davenport family of riders and remained with them for the next eight years. They were on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1919 to 1921 and then moved over to Hagenbeck-Wallace as a center ring attraction for 1922 through 1926. In that troupe, in addition to Bessie, were Victoria, Lulu, Ella and Offin Davenport and sometimes, M. McDonald.

Meanwhile, Edith Castello, early in the season of 1922 was on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in one of the four lady principal acts, the other equestriennes being Margaret Crandall, Victoria Davenport and Lulu Davenport. As noted under her photo in *Billboard*³, Edith was said by many to be one of the cleverest of bareback equestriennes. She accompanied Ed Walton in a beautiful riding act entitled "A Cabaret on Horseback." Later that year the Riding Waltons were on Pubillones Circus in Mexico when that organization went bankrupt and the acts were stranded there. They had to sell a horse in order to finance their return to the United States. In November when Edith was called home during the fatal illness of her father, Dave, Sr., Rose Walleth took her place with Ed Walton in his big riding act. Rose was a first cousin, her father, W. F. Walleth II, being the

brother of Ediths mother, Ada.

After opening in March of 1925 with the Miami Charity Circus, Edith and her husband went to the Frank J. McIntyre Circus for the summer season. Edith was made up as Maggie, a comedy rider. For some time she had been thinking of male riders who did comedy a la Hanneford and she decided to try it herself. She had great success in her efforts.

In mid-October, 1926 at Greenville, Mississippi the society realm of the circus world on Hagenbeck-Wallace displayed lavishly, gorgeously and gloriously when Bebe Castello, Bessie's daughter, was given a birthday surprise by the elite and smart set on the show. The public was invited and many spectators witnessed it. Gifts and messages came from many other tented shows. The Hagenbecks sent from Germany an emblem of a horse and somersault rider, expressive of the noted Castello Family of riders that Miss Bebe represented. Other significant gifts were: wrist watch from Lulu Davenport; fountain pen from Orrin Davenport; fitted over night bag from Orrie Davenport; red coat, trimmed with gray fur from her mother.

For 1927, 1928 and 1930 Bessie Castello was with Johnnie and Ruth Correia's riding act which also included Effie Davenport. In 1927 and 1928 this act shared time on John Robinson's Circus and Sells-Floto. In 1930 it was on Sells-Floto at Chicago. Later that year on the road, Bessie was with Hagenback-Wallace riding her principal act. Also, with Harriet Hodgini, dressed in elaborate wardrobe, she appeared as a pleasing "French Doll." While on Sells-Floto in 1927 Bessie gave a reception for daughter, Bebe, on her 15th birthday. That year Bebe was one of 42 manege riders on the show and also did an aerial act. On the same show in 1928 at Bellingham, Washington Bessie was injured in the Correia's riding act when the ring horse carrying five riders fell. She was caught under the horse and sustained some broken bones in her foot. However, she finished the act.

In 1929 Bessie was part of

the George Hanneford Family Riding Act on Downie Bros. Circus. Cecil Lowande and Albert DeSect were other members of this act which featured George Hanneford. Her 43rd birthday party in 1931 was celebrated in Glenn Falls, New York at the home of the Poodles and George Hanneford families. The table was set with flowers and candles and in the middle was what Poodles called a blond cake with 16 yellow candles. She received many presents and after dinner there was dancing with Poodles & Bessie doing an adagio. That summer while on Walter L. Main she married Billy Claire, the clown.

The next season Bessie was again riding on Walter L. Main. Edith was there also. During the holiday season of 1933-1934 Bessie was riding in the Hippodome Theater Circus (George Hamid) which closed during the first week of January. In May the Riding Waltons and Bessie were on Millikan Bros. Later the Waltons, George Walton and wife, Edith, and Bessie Castello, were on Cole and Rogers Circus. Presumably George Walton was a brother of her former husband,

Edward, who had died on August 21, 1932 at Kingston, New York of heart trouble. Also during the 1930's Edith rode in a circus act at Luna Park, Coney Island, New York with Bessie and with an adopted sister, Ruth. In the autumn of 1934 the Riding Waltons, were playing fairs. Rose Walleth was in the act and, together with Edith Walton, was doing remarkably clever riding

Victoria Davenport, Orrin Davenport, Lulu Davenport and Bess Castello on Ringling-Barnum around 1924.



stunts without pad, strictly bareback.

Many remember Bessie as the satin-clad rider who once led the Ringling Bros. street parades. As a bareback rider she was a daring and dainty artist who could hold her own with any troupe. The author, Dixie Wilson, described her as a "Cyclonic French boudoir doll in ruffles, ribbons, vermilion lips and a mop of curls" and as, "the young tornado in frilled turquoise pajamas and blond curls."⁴

In 1927 at J. T. Benson's Animal Farm in Nashua, New Hampshire Bessie conducted a riding school and broke 2 horses as rosin backs. Astride her beautiful horse, 'King', she won first prize in a picture contest conducted there. After retirement as a rider in 1935, she turned to comedy roles. She performed as a clown on Frank Wirth's Circus, also on Bailey Bros. Circus in 1945 and with the Roy Rogers Troupe in 1946. A decade later near the end of the season she worked the clown come-in on King Bros. & Cole Bros. Circus. Daughter Bebe married aerialist Joe Siegrist. Their daughter, Joanne, joined her parents in their act in 1944, then with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, and later married Elden Day, also an aerialist. Bessie Castello died on June 23rd, 1963 in Henderson. She had been in poor health for several years. Her daughter, Mrs. Bebe Waldren, was then living in Pendleton, Oregon.

Picking up again with the career of Dave Castello, Jr. and the Riding Castellos, we find them on Robinsons Famous Circus in 1915. In Display 13 there were two double principal acts, Mary Connors and Pearl Castello opposite Ouika and Mary Meers. Also the principal acts of Dave Castello and William Melrose were paired in Display #16. In addition, Dave and his wife, Pearl, rode a carrying act. The next season the Riding Castellos, Dave and Pearl, presented a carrying act on Robinson's 10 Big Shows. In 1917 they again appeared on John Robinson's Circus in various roles. Dave was one of 18 garland entry riders on matched horses, 6 in each ring. The Castellos in Display 15

presented a new edition of their carrying act in the center ring. In the other rings, carrying acts were presented by Orton and Ryan and by Edward Castello & Holland. Also, Dave was one of the three male principal riders on the show.

In 1918, the final year for Ringling Bros. Circus, the Castello-Rooney Troupe was one of three appearing in Display 4. The Rooney referred to here would had to have been Edward Rooney, who that year also appeared as a haute école artist. That fall Dave Castello and his wife with two horses and a groom went to Cuba to join O'Holloron Circus for the winter season. They went to Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1919 where Pearl Castello shared riding honors with Minnie Hodgini Rooney and Ouika Meers. In mid-season the Castellos, with their carrying act, replaced Charles and Minnie Rooney, who by then had left for Baraboo, Wisconsin to break a new act for the upcoming fair season. The Castellos continued on this show for 1920 and 1921. According to a photo at Circus World Museum, for part of the season of 1920 Dave rode with Irene Montgomery to the clowning of Walter Goodenough. This presentation was one of 3 carrying acts. Also, John Davenport and Dave rode principal acts in Display 8. That summer the Castellos were blessed with the birth of their daughter, Sylvia.

In 1921 Dave and Pearl presented one of the three carrying acts on the show and both of them rode principal acts. His brother, Edward, performed as an acrobat as well as one of 14 riders in the Garland Entry. About this time Edward joined Dave and his wife in the Riding Castellos act. Eddie was the riding comedian and this trio was to be together for 13 years. Their pay ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per week. In their presentation they worked before the public for only about twelve minutes at a time. However, let Edward explain in his own words: "But don't get the idea that that was all the work we did. We had to keep practicing all the time. In the riding game you really have a lay-off of

about a month every year. When you're not actually performing you're rehearsing and thinking up new stunts. There are many interesting things about the game. Of course you know that most performing horses are white. The reason for this is that they're easier to see. When a performer is turning a somersault on a horse he has to keep his eyes open; he sees a streak of white and tries to put his feet down in the middle of it.

"Balance and timing are the two prime essentials. Unless you time your jumps perfectly you're out of luck. You've seen a rider run across the ring and jump to a stand on the horse's back. Watch him and you'll see him hop and skip until his left foot touches the ground at exactly the same moment that the horse's left feet are down. If he were to jump while the horse's right feet were on the ground, he'd have to spring about two feet higher and even then he probably couldn't make it.

"When you're standing on a horse, your shoulders play the most important part in keeping the balance. Arms are always kept below the shoulders in order to help this balance: that is, unless they are supporting another performer. Another thing that is rather interesting is that you never see riders talking to one another while in the ring. Merely an occasional 'Right' or something like that. We never talked until we got together after the act and then

Letterhead used by Dave Castello in 1928. Circus World Museum collection.

we discussed whatever slip-up there might have been in the ring. Riding horses are known as 'rosin backs'-and we spell it that way, too. The resin is rubbed into their backs in order to counteract the natural oils and to give the performer a surer footing. It is also important that a rider's feet be absolutely dry, otherwise he's liable to slip and break his neck."⁵

For the week of April 3, 1922 the Riding Castellos appeared with the Riding Hodginis on the John G. Robinson Indoor Shrine Circus in Columbus, Ohio. The summer of 1922 was spent at the Luna Park Circus, Coney Island, where the Castellos presented a horizontal bar act on horseback. They also demonstrated the use of the mechanic for society ladies who wished to try their skill as circus riders. They closed their engagement there on September 2nd and embarked on an eight week tour of the fall fairs, the booking done by Wirth, Blumenfeld & Co. of New York City. Their first engagement was at the West Virginia State Fair at Wheeling, opening on September 4th. The Wirth & Blumenfeld attractions carried 45 people and utilized a special baggage car as well as a sleeper. On the closing of the fair dates a tour on the Pantages Circuit was projected for the winter season.

In 1923 Dave Castello and Pearl with Edward, doing the clowning, had a similar schedule. Looking forward to the fall fair dates and beyond, Dave was advertising a big novelty riding act with five people and three horses. The fair dates, beginning the week of September 17th and for successive weeks, were at Hutchinson, Kansas, Oklahoma City, Little Rock, Arkansas and ended at Shreveport, Louisiana on October 18th to 28th. After that he hoped for late summer fairs and then he was going to his booked winter indoor engagements.

From 1928 until 1935 Dave promoted Castello's Circus and Auto Show in the the spring time at Henderson. In 1928 the show was under canvas. On a quite descriptive letterhead

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A BIG LAUGHING HIT

under the date of January 18, 1928 he was seeking without success an engagement with an American Circus Corporation show for that season. Among other features the letterhead described the offerings as principal riders, both lady and gentleman, a three person comedy act and novelty carrying and jockey acts with four horses. Also it was claimed that the Castelllos were originators of the horizontal bar act on three bareback horses as well as pole vaulting.

The horizontal bar act, with three horses running abreast in the ring as depicted in black and white drawings, was in two forms. In one a man and clown each stood on one outside horse with a horizontal bar across their shoulders. A young lady did various acrobatic maneuvers on the bar. In the second version, the lady and a man each stood on the outside horses. With a special type of brace from their shoulders, the horizontal bar was held above their heads. A clown frolicked on the bar with various routines.

The Castello presentations were listed as all different novelty equestrian feats concluding with the comedy riding school showing how bareback riders were made. The riding mechanic demonstration was guaranteed to be a big laughing hit. All of these acts were boosted as big attractions for fairs, circuses, parks, vaudeville and other indoor shows.

In 1928 the Castelllos had eight weeks of big fair contracts beginning the first week of August. The following spring they promoted the Indoor Circus, Auto Show, and Merchant's Exposition in Henderson. Dave was manager and the Riding Castelllos Troupe included both Edward Castello and his sister, Edith Walton. They presented a novelty 3 horse act and also the Castello ponies. Edward and Edith each rode principal acts. Barlow's goats were also present. Repeating in 1930, the Merchant's Exposition and Indoor Circus featured both the Dave and Charles Castello families. In 1934 the Riding Castelllos were stars of their own one ring circus, playing summer dates, sometimes in parks such as at Allegheny, Pennsylvania. While there



This photo of the Dave Castello, Jr. riding act appeared in the 1925 Wirth-Hamid booking catalog.

they visited friends on Hagenbeck-Wallace which was playing nearby.

That winter, back in Henderson, Dave was in his role as a bank director and Edward was the proprietor of two jewelry stores. On October 17th, in anticipation of his retirement in about six months from the circus ring, David Castello offered the following for sale: 3 beautiful white bareback horses well broke; special made steel ring curb and mechanic; one special built horse van with mats and stalls complete with special low construction; one baggage truck with canvas top; special built boxes and places for rigging; one complete dog, pony and monkey act; three ponies, four dogs, one somersaulting riding baboon, one well broken giant rhesus monkey complete with cage, ring pad and props; one bucking mule for January act. The reason for selling was that other business required his attention at home. No evidence was found that the above equipment and animals were sold at that time.

The next May Dave was again at the head of the Henderson Auto Show, Merchants Exposition and Circus which closed on May 18th and featured the farewell appearance of the Castello Family as circus performers. Under a 60 by 90 big top, Dave and Pearl presented dogs and ponies, Edith did a principal act and Charles, Sr. did upside down loop walking. With Charles, Jr. he also did a cloud swing act. The Dave Castello Family did bareback riding. Their

only child, Sylvia, was now 15 and was able to substitute for her mother in the riding act when Pearl might be indisposed.

After the close of their circus careers in 1935, practically all of the Castelllos remained pillars of the Henderson community. As late as 1951 Dave was the owner of a hardware store, a director of the First National Bank and a member of the city council. Charlie was the proprietor of a smoke shop and owned a taxi business. He had never joined his brothers and sister in the standing riding acts. His specialties had been the single high swinging perch, cloud swing, Roman rings and loop walking. Three of his five children were also in the circus business, Charles, Jr. in acts like his father's while daughters Zazel and Margie were acrobats. The adopted sister, Ruth, had become a school teacher. Edward with the firm of Loughlin and Goodwin had jewelry stores in Henderson and Warrenton, North Carolina.

In the spring of 1958 Edward Castello died at the age of 58 of a heart attack while riding in an automobile with his brother near Henderson. He was survived by his widow, Katherine, and two sons, Dr. Edward C. Loughlin, Jr. and David C. Loughlin III, both in universities, brother, David, and two sisters, Mrs. Edith O'Lary of Florida and Mrs. Ruth Jeffries of Raleigh, North Carolina. Additional survivors included Bebe Castello Siegrist, a performer until recently, and Joanne Day, a great niece and only member of the family still troupng at that time.

David Loughlin, Jr. survived his brother, Edward, by several years. Pearl, died in March of 1978.

Notes:

1. *White Tops*, December 1936-January 1937, p. 13
2. *New York Clipper*, February 26, 1910, p. 51
3. *Billboard*, September 9, 1922, p. 74
4. *Southern Sawdust*, Spring, May 1955
5. *White Tops*, December 1936 January 1937, p. 12

General References:

- Hobbies Magazine*, February 1951, p. 28, 29
Hobbies Magazine, May 1951, p. 26, 27

Bill Kasiska's Letterheads

Ringling
BROS and BARNUM & BAILEY

ROLAND BUTLER • General Press Representative



This interesting letterhead was designed and used by Roland Butler in 1929. The type is in black and the lines and the clown face are red.

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Three Reviews of the 1922 Ringling-Barnum Circus Opening

Editor's note. The April 1, 1922 Billboard published two of the best written and most complete reviews of the New York Madison Square Garden opening. The Variety review was published on March 31.

By GORDON WHYTE

New York, March 25. "The year's at the spring, the day's at the morn," and, coincidentally with these twain terrestrial phenomena, that peripatetic pageant of peerless prodigality, provided with praiseworthy percipience, by its proprietors, and loudly parading the patronymic of the Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, performed its perennial palingeneses and pandiculated its plethoric performance around the perimeter of Madison Square Garden amid the panegyric plaudits and paeonic praise of press and public. In other words this afternoon the greatest of great shows and bigger of big circuses again invaded the metropolis and unfolded its radiant revels to a rejoicing ring of spectators, who packed the place from pit to pinnacle and basked in the splendors of the profuse performance provided for their pleasure.

The immense crowd, all being in their seats and impatiently awaiting the signal to begin the performance, applauds rapturously when Fred Bradna, general equestrian director, blows his whistle and four mounted heralds swing thru the giant doors and announce the start of the grand entry. The band, gaily projecting the strains of a rhythmic march, is followed by a pageant depicting well-known fairy tales for the delectation of patrons, young and old, is most colorful and gorgeous and the children squeal with glee when they spot

"Bluebeard," "Cinderella" and "Santa Claus." The tail of the procession emerges into view with elephants caparisoned in colorful cloths and gems and wearing beautifully plumed headdresses. The grand entry amply fulfills the intimation given last fall by the Ringling Brothers that they would spare no expense to provide the finest grand entry ever seen in any circus. By this time Merle Evans' cohorts have reached their destination, and, dash into their uniforms, are ready to provide the music for the rest of the performance.

This consists first of exhibitions of

The cover of the 1922 Ringling-Barnum program. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



trained wild animals in arenas already erected in the three rings. "Mickey" Graves and his band of willing helpers hustle out the large wheeled dens, and into the right and left wings pour troupes of polar bears, while in the center ring Peter Radke puts a group of lions thru their paces. They pose and leap and enact little scenes of domestic felicity with Peter. In the meantime Christian Shroder and E. Shroder are making the denizens of the Frozen North group themselves in all sorts of combinations. Then Fred Bradna blows his whistle, "Mickey" Graves again appears upon the scene and the animals are toted off while the rigging is being prepared for the next display.

This consists of the Latell Sisters, The Seafords, The Tybell Sisters and Miss Kayden, who give a graceful, skillful and colorful human butterfly exhibition. These Iron Jaw artists whirl in kaleidoscopic rhythms amid rafters and delight all with their work.

Then the arenas are again occupied, this time by five tigers and one black panther in Ring No. 1 under direction of Mabel Stark, with six tigers in Ring No. 2 under Rudolph Matthies, and in Ring No. 3 with six lions under the control of an unprogrammed trainer. Miss Stark arouses the admiration of the crowd with her wise handling of the beasts, particularly the black panther, which is said to be the only performing one in existence. He wants to do what he wills, but Miss Stark resolves otherwise and makes him see her point with dexterity and fearlessness. The animals pose and jump beautifully, and she earns the applause of the

crowd for her skillful work. In the meantime the six tigers in the adjoining arena are guided thru their tricks by Rudolph Matthies. They respect their guide, philosopher and friend and do their stunts with alacrity. Then the six lions in the next arena leap over obstacles and pose in tableaux, and these exhibitions of able animal training continue until the whistle is sounded again, and Lew Graham announces in stentorian tones that the Messrs. DeLong and Dooley will slide down an inclined wire "on their respective heads." Lew draws the first laugh of evening with this announcement and DeLong and Dooley get a big round of applause with their feats. Mlle. Ruby then starts swaying on her revolving ladder. She pendulums back and forth, reaches a point of equilibrium where she is exactly upside down and then, amid the gasp of the crowd, revolves over and over. Focused in the glare of many spotlights it is a pretty exhibition and quite charms the audience.

Then comes the parade of "The Strange People." They march around the hippodrome track headed by the dwarfs, with George Auger bringing up in the rear. In between are all the notables of the world of wonders and the crowd gazes with awe at the mutations of Mother Nature, which so arouse their amazement and curiosity. Mr. Charles Ringling smiles the famous smile at this galaxy of curiosities and at the psychological moment gives the signal to Captain Auger, who picks up Count Baucci, puts him on his shoulders, swaps hats with him and exits to the laughter and applause of the multitude.

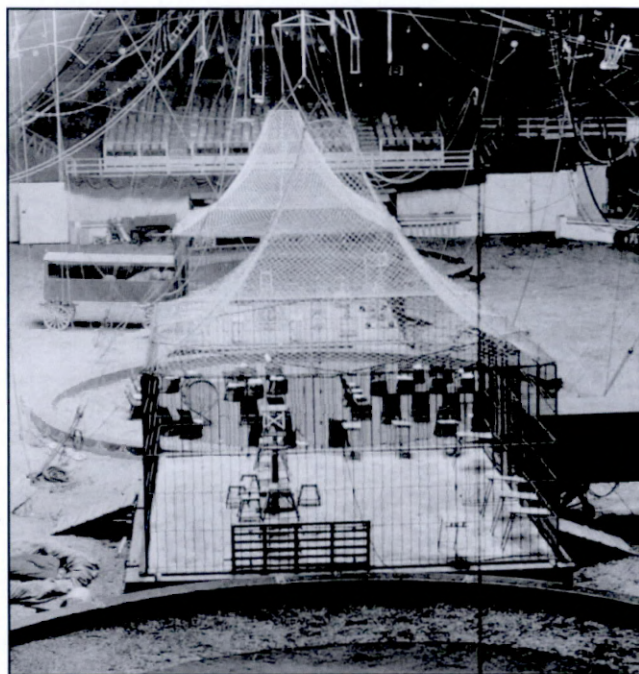
Now the elephants enter, fifteen in all, five to each ring. Under the tutelage of J. L. B. Clarke, Clare Hildegard and Charles Hampton. The wise old pachyderms play ball, dance, build pyramids on two high



Mabel Stark with her tigers and black panther.

pedestals and go through a routine of acrobatics that would give, a human being pause. Then nine more of the huge beasts are led into the hippodrome track, where the whole twenty-four rise up on their hind legs and acknowledge the plaudits of the audience. Simultaneously with this exhibition the clowns have invaded the track and give a medley, mixture, hodge-podge and jumble of jolly and laughter. One pair solicitously tends a baby who waxes rapidly fat from

The steel arenas in Madison Square Garden.



imbibing the contents of a four-gallon milk bottle. They tickle the risibles of the crowd mightily. Then all exit merrily while a group of performers scamper aloft for the next display.

This consists of feats of the lofty trapeze. M. Bernard, The Rooneys, Hillary Long, Ira Millette, Edward Millette and Les Zerados are the participants. The Rooneys and Les Zerados do excellent double work and the former pair thrill the house with a breakaway trapeze. Then the single artists balance on the small support of a trapeze bar on their several heads, the while smoking, eating and gesticulating wildly with feet and arms. For a finish Hillary Long swings widely, while balanced on his skull, to a big hand.

While the aerialists clamber down from their perches the joeys come on the hippodrome track and create the usual laughter with a mixture of medley, variety and diversification of nonsense. Old and young chortle with glee at their antics and one does not know who does it the harder. While this is going on everything has been made ready for the three equestrian displays. The Tarneffs occupy one ring and the three girls, prettily dressed as jockeys, do some thrilling stunts on gray rosin backs. The Serillos, garbed as Andalusians and consisting of five men and one woman, leap blithely upon their horses and are away for a few minutes of skillful riding. In the center ring Ella Bradna rides gracefully and makes her exit on the track in a huge liberty chariot, surrounded by horses, dogs and pigeons, amid the "ohs" and "ahs" of the admiring audience.

Now the clown band enters and renders "How Dry I Am," with lachrymose sobs by the trombone soloists. While in the throes of coaxing the "new National anthem" out of his instrument a bucket of water is spilled on him from

aloft, to the manifest glee of the onlookers, who one and all yell with joy at this bit of jocosity. Meanwhile six velvet hoods and revolving tables have been placed in position for the half-dozen posing acts, which now make their appearance. The immense auditorium is darkened and batteries of lights are directed on the six groups. Besides the statuesque beauties who portray groups of statuary there are the posing dogs and horses to please the eye and awaken the wonderment of all and sundry.

Then come several minutes of fast and furious Wild West riding, participated in by Cy Compton, Hank Durnell, Art Boden, Madeline Dupree, Bud Hurlin, Jack Nelson, Joe Flint and Lottie Shaw. The lassos are thrown, the pony post rider leaps on his equine relays and the bucking bronchos buck. The house enthuses wildly at this display and gives all a generous hand.

They are followed by the gymnasts and tumblers. In the center ring is the Sie Thar Troupe of ten, with a wonderful girl tumbler, who does a whirlwind finish after a special announcement by Lew Graham. Then there are the Joe Dekoes Troupe, the Boston Brothers and the Loretas. The last named do a splendid act on the horizontal bars that is both unusual and unique. The Boston Brothers have a thrilling finish wherein one of the men leaps over a row of nine standing men from a tetter board to his partner's hands, and the Dekoes Troupe toss each other about as they were made of feathers instead of bone and sinew.

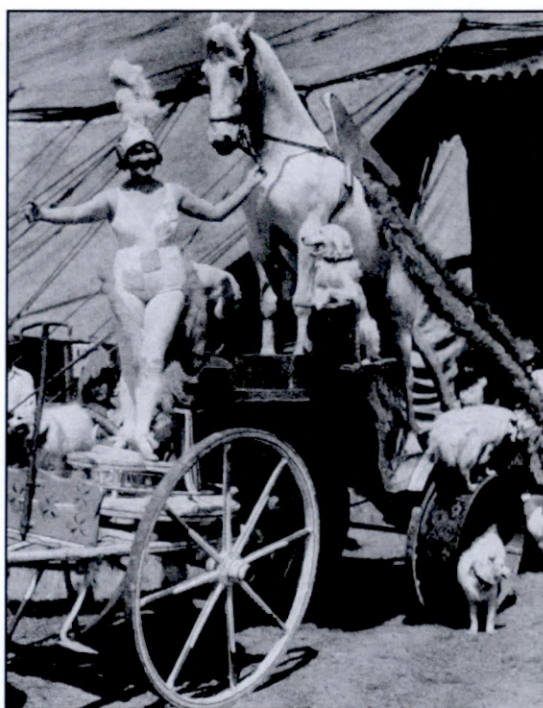
Next a fine display of high-school horsemanship is given. Adolph Hess, Manuel Herog, Frank Miller, John Foley, William Elliston and Misses Minnie Taylor and Lillian Compton direct the wonderful animals through dances, prances, capers and poses. The horses are trained to the minute and the skill of the riders makes the most of all that the clever animals know. The house rises to the beauty of the exhibition and speeds them on their way with a furious burst of applause.



Lithograph featuring dwarf clown Joe Bagoughl.

Again the clowns enter and with gelastic gesticulations these funny rascals occupy the attention of the crowd while the stages and rings are prepared for an array of acrobatic acts. These consist of the June Brothers, the Rice Trio, H. Rittley, Joe Bagoughl, Arena Brothers, the Four Comrades and the Hart Brothers. Harry Rittley makes the audience gasp when he falls from a swaying pyramid of five tables and a

Ella Bradna's "Act Beautiful."



chair, and a glance first at this turn and then the other shows the various acts working away for dear life, capturing a round of applause and a laugh here and a laugh there with their tricks. Top mounters are tossed airily aloft on the shoulders of comrades and comic fellows are knocked down to rise again triumphant. In the center ring, Joe Bagoughl, the dwarf equestrian, has the house shaking with laughter at his comic caperings. Suspended on his mechanic, he rides and falls, poses and trips, rides first on the ears of his horse and then tries the tail for a change. This is horsemanship with a vengeance, and the ridiculousness of it quite captures the fancy of the crowd. They give Bagoughl a rousing hand when he doffs his wig at the finish to convince them that he is not the pretty miss at all but a full-fledged, if diminutive, masculine.

The Joeys are on the track again, this time with trick automobiles. Henry Ford doesn't know the half of it, as the flappers say. In his worst nightmare he never imagined the product of his genius cutting up as these vehicles do. After the crowd, has had its laugh at this the amphitheater is plunged into darkness and bathed in the glow of spotlights. Lillian Leitzel enters, attended by her maid, and walks to the ring

where, after being properly introduced in a very special, announcement by Lew Graham, she clambers hand over hand up the webbing to a pair of rings in the air. A splendid picture she makes, clothed in spotless white, as to the seductive strains of a melodious waltz she again demonstrates her matchless superiority as an aerialist. But wait a moment something is wrong. The rigging is twisted and a refractory ring supporting her apparatus will not function properly. She tries to shake it into order, but it still proves refractory. Then she climbs up the rope of the other ring, supports herself by clinging on with her knees and beats the stubborn steel into submission, as one would curb the doings of some unruly animal. The audience which has been all alert to

see how she would get out of her predicament, applauds wildly as she returns to her rings and continues her act for a finish. Miss Leitzell is hoisted aloft hanging in a loop, and does a one-arm pull-up flange just 62 times. Work like this cannot fail to awaken multitudinous response in the hearts of the auditors, and as the artiste exits she is treated to a continuous volley of applause from all sections of the house.

Now come the seals, two displays of them handled by Mark and Frank Huling. They juggle and balance and when they applaud themselves by clapping their flippers the crowd howls. Nothing stops this but a well-directed chunk of herring, and the sleek animals smack their chops over this and return to their work with vim. Meanwhile Al Loyal's dogs have been performing in the center ring. This well-known act is without peer in its line. The intelligence of the animals and the willingness with which they perform their tasks quite captivate the house and the resultant laughter and applause is good to hear. Then comes a most extraordinary trick for the finish. Loyal sets all but one of his dogs racing in a line on top of the ring bank while the other dog races in the opposite direction, and when he meets the crowd of his fellows leaps blithely over them. It is thrilling and novel and takes the house by storm.

Next the perch acts. There are five of these, including the Andresen Brothers, the Three Jahns, the Three Phillips, the Wise Troupe and the White Family. Skillful and daring all, they please the crowd with their artistry. The Three Jahns work a double perch and for their finish one of lads balances on his head atop the pole. The Wise Troupe choose to whirl around the pole and this gets a big hand.

Then everything gives way to Mr. Hess, and his trained horses. They occupy the center ring. First enter six beautiful grays that drill with military precision. Then six sorrels come on and after a smart bit of maneuvering march through arches in a

large standard and poke their muzzles through smaller opening in the top. It makes an exquisite picture and pleases the house mightily. For the finish twelve blacks are led on, each bearing a number. The horses scuffle themselves out of numerical order, then apparently without cuing reassemble in proper consecutive



The Siegrist-Silbon Troupe of trapeze performers.

order. This fairly fascinates everybody in the house, and they audibly count as each animal reaches his proper place. Everybody is interested, and when the little mathematical problem is solved satisfactorily the audience spontaneously bursts into a young bombardment of applause.

The joeys come on again, this time with a comedy mule, a two-horse sleigh with the occupants furnishing their own snow and the nightmare bed. Everybody laughs at the funny rascalions and then turns attentively to the equestrian acts, which occupy the three rings. In the first are the Torvelles, the center ring is used by the Reifenraths and ring No. 3 has Rooney-Meers. They all ride beautifully, and the Reifenraths, who are making their debut in this country, specialize in riding two high. Their last trick is a marvelous bit of skill. One of the girls lifts the other up on hand while riding around the ring, and it is as startling as it is daring. One of the girls in the Rooney-Meers act falls from her horse and has to be assisted out of the ring, but even with the handicap the turn is impressive.

But wait a moment Ella Bradna's "Act Beautiful" appears.

Way is again made for the clowns, while the nets are being prepared for the big flying return acts. The joeys turn loose their harmless, innocent and inoffensive fun, to the joy of all. Cries of censorship for the stage and screen do not worry them. In all the gabble about that subject no one has ever mentioned the circus. Why?

Because never the breath of suspicion has been directed against that institution since it has been in the hands of wise and foreseeing showmen. Nowhere in the performance is there anything to offend the most discriminating. Even the Rev. John Roach Straton has never a word to say against the circus. And does it pay? As the ancient Greeks used to ejaculate: "We'll say so."

Well, the clowns have departed and the aerial artists are ready. On one set of apparatus is spied The Siegrist-Silbon Troupe, who toss each other from trapeze to trapeze with easy grace. The finish is thrilling, with one of the boys flying on the high bars. At the other end of the Garden the Charles Siegrist Troupe holds forth, doing a routine of difficult tricks with the surety born of long and arduous training. In the center are The Clarkonians, incomparable artists. The flyer is laboring under the handicap of a lame leg, but he is gamely goes through his routine and misses nothing.

Then the big finale on the hippodrome track. First, the jockey race, then the riderless horse, then the whippets, followed by the two-horse standing race and finally the chariot contest. Merle Evans strikes up the national anthem, we stretch our legs, and sorry that it is all over so soon, drink our ice cream soda in silence, slightly bemused by the wonders we have seen and speculating on the amount of hard labor, ingenuity and showmanship that has been utilized in putting the big show together. We give up, after concluding that, whatever it was, it was worth while, for it is going to bring joy to millions, especially the children, and the folks who can do that are accomplishing a last-

ing good for their fellow creature. Surely, that is not the least of their rewards.

By William Judkind Hewitt
New York, March 26. Messrs. John Ringling and Charles Ringling, the fortune-favored and fascinating mental aggressives of the circus world, have again negotiated successfully one more plane in their onward and upward stride towards their attainment of their idea of what the ultra modern American circus must reveal.

In smiling on these men of vision and unexampled qualities for assembling animate and inanimate entertainment features from all the earth, the God of Success must have had in mind for them the application of the old philosophic saying: "Fortune only becomes fascinated with the efficient."

When questioned as to how it is possible for such accomplishment they modestly referred to one of their recent announcements, to wit: "We are able to do this because we enjoy the patronage of the public, with whom we have never broken faith, who believe in us and in whom we believe and between us there is an understanding that honesty is our policy." Being in the position they now occupy it is only fair to concede that they are fully justified in fostering upon the public their present form of circus entertainment as meeting a demand of their public and thereby consistent with its wants.

After witnessing the performance of the Ringling Bros. Greatest Shows and Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth Combined at Madison Square Garden, Saturday evening, your humble scribe came away with a sense of duty to his readers and an avowed intent to attempt the recording of a performance that was clean and inspiring. There is not a "sting" in the whole ensemble; no prodding of one's acute sensibilities that "he had paid for a ticket and was thereby entitled to decry merit" even though he did not fully coincide with the order of presentation or repetition of acts and features from other days. This must suffice—they came well near making the statements on



The elephants performing in the Garden.

their lithographs actual facts and living realities.

What the press said in headlines:

TIMES: "Animal acts unusually good this season."

WORLD: "It's here at last—'Biggest on Earth.'"

HERALD: "Everything seems new, from the band to the fool reunion of clowns."

TELEGRAPH: "Smooth performance marks first stand of combined shows."

Signs announcing performances twice daily, 1:15 and 8:15. Doors open one hour earlier.

George W. Smith, superintendent of the front door, with his assistants, N. Shanley, Al Murray, Morris Taylor and Gabe Dettermere, admitted the throngs. The program stand has Joseph Mayer, publisher, with Thomas Burke in charge.

John Brice, chief officer, was on duty. His second season. Into the arena—Chick Bell and staff again exemplified efficiency in directing patrons to seats.

Lew Graham on his way to his position for the general announcement. Fred Bradna waiting for the signal for the whistle by Mr. Charles Ringling, then in the dressing room.

Madison Square Garden presents a better interior this year than ever before for the presentation of a circus performance. It is wondrously illuminated and more colorful and is void of all tawdry bunting and streamers. Since last season a swimming pool encased in art tiling has been erected and with the water drawn off leaves a wall of tiling which makes an attractive bowl for

the stages and rings, and as well provides for a promenade between the wall and box fronts, also encased in art tile. This arrangement also prevents the latecomers from stepping onto the hippodrome track to reach their seats, thereby not cutting into the arena picture. Overhead and on every side are flood and spotlights in abundance. The art octagon shaped, glass encased lights tallying with the color scheme of the pool wall, and not utilized literally as light projectors, but enhance the picture admirably. The seating capacity appears as much greater by reason of the fact that the space formerly used over the dressing room entrance is filled with seats and only a small portion of it to the right is taken up as the band stand, and the band uses a pneumatic calliope as before. The house had nearly capacity at the night performance.

In speaking of the color scheme it is well to mention that the animal arenas are painted attractively and have all new white woven hoods over each, and the ring banks are artistically scrolled in colors. An innovation used in connection with the wild animal acts is rubber tired shifting dens, which attracted considerable notice, especially from the automobile clan present.

Mickey Graves has seen to it that every piece of "props" is perfect and painted to the scheme. All lines, blacks, fails, nets and guy lines do not appear one inch longer or to have one which that does not work for perfect utility. His army of setters and clearers worked in perfect harmony and the way they cleared the arenas deserve special mention. There are three animal arenas occupying the rings, and two stages, as usual.

Hitting the performance in high spots—There are no wire-walking acts in evidence: no one sings with the band to plug songs or otherwise. It is the producing and directing that makes the performance different. Opening with the animal numbers drags a little, but serves admirably for the after effect. Competitive numbers on the hippodrome track and on stages, in the arenas and rings also

has been carefully thought out: for example, in the high school horse numbers.

Noticed that Mr. Charles Ringling and Cy Compton were very cheerful in discussing that entrance and exits for the Wild West display.

Fred Bradna walked in and out of the pageant with a keen eye for time and effect, while Mr. Charles Ringling was sending out each section in synchronization to the music of the band.

Did not see Olga's leopards.

Lew Graham did not say "leddies and gemmin"—he attracted attention in clear, stentorian tones with "ladies and gentlemen" which was heard in every corner of the arena.

Merle Evans has forty-four selections listed from the world's most famous musical composers used by his band. He has probably one hundred "cues" painted in his brain.

The program presents eight clowns. All lean to the musical and mechanical for effect rather than to the acrobatic. The performing "flivvers" were used to great effect. The mule that "picked up" the rider with his head was a howl all along the track. Several other novelties were shown along with standbys.

Peter Radke understudied for Thomas Wilmoth. Mabel Stark performed marvelously and gracefully with tigers and a black panther, the later said to be the only one in training.

Five elephants in each ring, making fifteen performing at once. The standup on the hippodrome track displayed twenty-four. All the "bulls" are programmed as being under the personal direction of the foremost elephant trainer of the world, George Denman.

Cy Compton, Hank Durnell. Art Borden, Madeline Dupree, Bud Hurlin, Jack, Neilson. Joe Flint and Lottie Shaw did all in "whirlwind Wild West" that seemed possible of accomplishment.

Adolph Hess, and his horses again proved a sensation and had the center ring masterfully.

Fred Bradna escorted Lillian Leitzel to her rigging. She was the recipient of a beautiful floral tribute the conclusion of her display.



Mickey Graves, Ringling-Barnum property superintendent.

Clyde Ingalls directed the ground-work for her.

Twenty-five displays make up the program from pageant to the sixth event in, the hippodrome races which is "out and over" for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Shows' first performance for the season of 1922.

In the side show and annex the throngs poured in by the thousands and found Lew Graham, Clyde Ingalls and Barry Knowles orating on the wonders therein perched high on platforms gaily masked in artistic backgrounds. Most perfect was the grooming of the orators and the tasteful costuming of the ladies and gentlemen of the "human oddities" realm. Each and every one a star. The following lineup bespeaks the merit of each in terms that may challenge any writer: Robert Campbell, armless wonder; Raudion, Hindoo worker; Miss Arteria, tattooed lady; Ajax, sword swallower; Lentiani, three-legged Sicilian; Karo, "missing link;" Count Paucci, midget; Cliquot, Bushman; Habu, man with the iron tongue; Mr. and Mrs., William Van Droysen, giant and giantess from Holland; Fips, African midget; Amok, Igorotte head hunter; Martha Morris, born without arms; Catherine Holt, fat lady; Princess Wee Wee, smallest African lady; Lillian Maloney, Albino; Zip, Barnum's "What is it;" Captain George Augar, Cardiff giant; Mr. and

Mrs. Doll, handsome Lilliputians; Laquella, man with the revolving head; Chief Pautagal, Fourth Sea Islander; Captain Walters, the blue man; Three Hoy Sisters, midgets, and Mme. Gilmore, serpent enchantress.

Zip appeared in full evening dress.

In the dens were a group of Oryx Leucoryx; a father, mother and a baby giraffe; Rhesus monkeys and whitetail gnus from Africa.

George Auger sold finger rings large enough for napkin rings.

In the basement menagerie—Frank Schaffer, assisted by Charles Fern, dealing out the soft drinks and candy. Mrs. Schaffer arrived from New Orleans. Every inch of space in the menagerie filled with dens, stalls and pits filled with rare and strange Beasts—carnivorous and otherwise. Thirty-four elephants—count 'em; herds of camels and kindred kind. Gold and glitter lavishly laid on by artistic hands covered the cages.

In and around the press office—E. P. Norwood, Dexter Fellows, Lester Thompson and William L. Wilkin greeted representatives of the press and friends of the show and themselves—"boys" of Park Row also included as friends. Each of the Ringling-Barnum press staff occupied a desk. Mr. Charles Ringling begged to be excused because he had to act as equestrian director owing to a slight indisposition due to a cold on the part of John Agee, the officially programmed equestrian director. Before going Mr. Ringling stated that Thomas Wilmoth, lion trainer, had been clawed by one of his pets at the dress rehearsal, but he hoped to have him back in the arena in about ten days. He requested William L. Wilkin to help check up the program, at the same time saying that Miss Pallenberg and Mons. Pallenberg would be in the show next week and only out of this performance because he wished to "speed up" the show at this number. We looked on the program for the Pallenbergs' display number and found it to be 13. "Performing bears are a remarkable troupe of saggy giants" read the over lines in the program billing.

Ollie, Webb invited us over to have a feed on the lot in Brooklyn. He said when questioned: "I have eight especially constructed cookhouse wagons

this season—where's William J. Hilliar?" Just then Harry Overton chimed in: "Ollie will have to feed a thousand three times a day this season." Dexter Fellows remarked he had known William L. Wilkin for thirty-odd years—but he is not that aged.

Lew Graham said, "Meet Alfonso Francole, the man responsible for all of the electric illumination and effects used in the show. He has been with it for years." There goes Eddie Polo, the famous moving picture actor. Fred Warrell expressed pleasure at meeting so many of his old friends and associates, and asked where his son Lawrence was he said, "Out there in the lobby on the job."

George Roddy, former circus agent, greeted many friends, Spoke of his brother William, also formerly of the lots.

Willie Uyesugi, Japanese performer, walked in and asked Charles Kannely, general secretary, and Mesrs. John and Charles Ringling a few questions and went out. Dan Debaugh, general manager of the Ringling-Barnum Chicago office, was very busy greeting friends and business associates.

A. H. Barkley looked over the Annex attractions and as he was leaving for his box in the arena someone of the agents remarked: "There goes Mr. Barkley, general agent of the Johnny J. Jones Exposition." Lew Graham said: "Don't forget 'Alpine' the fat girl, joins the Annex Monday."

Several of the press boys wished it to be known that the Saturday matinee was a "sell-out" and the best opening they could remember at the Garden.

George F. Meighan, John M. Kelly, Frank Cook, W. H. Horton, Charles Snowhill, W. J. Conway, Thomas Dailey, Harry Overton, John McLachlan and others of the staff were on and busy with the opening,

Charles Hutchinson had a world of details to attend to. When asked about the names of the staff he said: "See Charles Ringling about that."

Al Butler, contracting agent, traveled a long way to be at the opening.

Harry Overton pleasantly recalled the days around the old Wellington Hotel, Chicago in the days of "13."

James McCullough sold the programs in the Annex. Was told he was no relation to the actor of that name, but that he had been selling the books with that show for some eighteen years.

Richard and Robert Ringling were there in due time for the opening.

John Ringling was in and out as the vast details under his hand came to demand his attention in winter quarters, Asked for him, but was told he was probably holding a staff conference some place.

Not to be out done *Variety* published this review of the opening.

When the Ringling Brothers combined their big top with the Barnum & Bailey circus, also owned by them, several years ago, the show was in a general way built around an array of star performers. Last season saw the re-entry of wild animal turns, which this season is even more prominent. There was a time when a circus was not a circus unless it had a wild animal act. In reverting to the animal features the Ringlings have pyramided them with probable objective of a "bigger than ever" impression upon audiences. They have this season

used the "intensive" idea for heretofore-neglected performers groups, and those acts are brought out to better advantage than before.

Zip without his formal dress.

There are 22 new turns in this year's line-up. That takes in the fresh wild animal acts. The securing of the later was

made following the European depression after the war. The Ringlings making wholesale purchases of the Hagenbeck mart at Hamburg. Some of the newer animals this year were secured from the Santos & Artigas

circus in Cuba. There may not be a considerable additional number of wild beasts this season over last for not a few were lost during the cross-country tour of the big show after leaving Madison Square Garden last April. However, it takes a whole carcass of a horse to feed them daily. The "liberty horses" which share the featuring with the jungle cats also suffered losses and replacements. They, likewise a fresh display last season, are given more prominence.

The show publicly opened at the Garden Saturday afternoon, March 25. It will remain just five weeks and a day. Friday night's dress rehearsal took four hours. Saturday night the show was cut to two hours and three-quarters, the finale coming just past 11. That bespeaks of crack showmanship. The Ringlings' smartness is having smart people to direct the show is an open secret of their leadership. The polished Fred Bradna, programmed as general equestrian director, which really means the boss of the performance, ran off the first night's show with admirable skill. There were numerous changes from the dress performance, and there were but two general rehearsals which all the more emphasized the excellence of the management. Bradna ran the works, John Agee being out ill. Dressed like a dancing master, Bradna's easy, yet decisive, direction counts as a skilled performance in itself.

Three entire displays were out of the show Saturday night. Some of the other sections lopped off will not be used until the outfit gets under canvas. One of the displays cut was a three-arena wild animal feature. That was forced out after the dress rehearsal when Thomas Wilmoth was savagely bitten and clawed by a lion. His thigh was terribly lacerated, but he was able to save himself by falling into the safety cage, but was in serious condition at Bellevue hospital, with danger of infection.

The wild animal acts are the "jab" of the show. It is necessary to put them on immediately after the pag-eant because of the time to rig the cages. The Garden again had three steel arenas in position when the doors opened. There were two animal displays, instead of the three listed,



and held all attention, all arenas going to both. Christian Schroder and E. Schroder, the later new this season, put the beasts through their paces at the opening, with Rudolph Matthies probably using the center arena, which held five lions, though it is possible M. Thomaso or Peter Radike handled whip and steel fork, they being listed in another display that was pulled out.

The second display held Mabel Stark in the first arena. A slight woman, with remarkable nerve, formerly with the Al G. Barnes show. The manner in which she made seven big tigers and a black panther "jump through" thrilled the crowd, and she walked off with ringing plaudits, easily the star of the animal displays. It is acknowledged by the circus men Miss Stark, is the greatest woman trainer in the world, and it is doubted if she has an equal among the male animal trainers. Her "cats" are magnificent, quite the biggest in the entire outfit. The presence of the startling Black Panther was a surprise. The beast has arrived here a week before the show opened. None of the men trainers could get near it. But Miss Stark went into an arena, lashed him with a whip and pole and soon had the black streak rolling over and sitting up. At the nether arena M. Philadelphia is the son of the old Forepaugh trainer worked a whole flock of young lions recently arrived and amused the crowd when he had to chase the last beast to leave around the ring half a dozen times. When it finally leaped into the cage wagon, its fellows started chasing it, and the door was closed on its tail. The steel tunnel was used only for one tiger turn, wagons being employed to bring on and take off the other beasts. That permitted more speed in dismantling the arenas.

Another new animal act was Schroder's polar bears, something of a novelty. Olga Celestte, who pulled leopards by the tails, was out with the discarded display, but will go back when the show takes to the road.

Between the two animal displays was a flying and iron jaw exhibit, the Latell Sisters, Seafords, Tybell Sisters and Miss Kayden working in



Lillian Leitzel, the Queen of the Circus.

this display, also was DeMarkos, whose contortionistic stunts on a high trapeze won him extra time after the others had descended, Hillary Long's head slide down a wire was doubled up. Bernard Dooley doing the stunt on one side of the ring, while Long worked the other. The slides were worked in immediately after the flyers and the ele-

Harry Rittely's table rock.



phants were brought in, rather early for them, but a good spot.

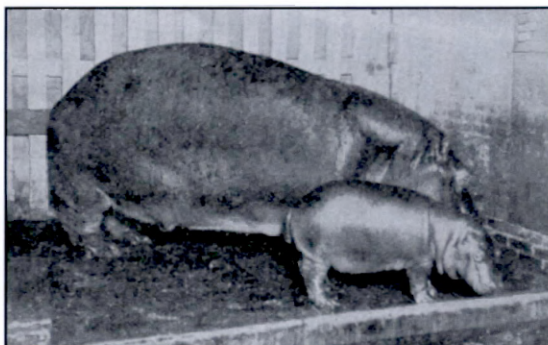
J. L. B. Clarke and Charles Hampton in the end rings and Clair Hildegard in the center, the latter looked very well, the entire elephant display is again under George Denman's direction. When he lined 24 bulls the length of the Garden to "take a bow" it was impressive, the pachyderms rose on hind legs, each lofting a man on its head.

Intensive high trapeze work made up the next display. The Rooneys and Les Zeraldos did the teamwork. Miss Rooney, a sweet looking lass, caught the fancy of the audience, This display, however, was featured by five high trapeze head balancers, all doing similar stunts. The lineup had Bernard Dooley, Hillary Long, Ira Millette, Edward Millette and one other. One of the Milletts with a wing swing head balance was given the extra minute. The worker on extreme east of the Garden should have been given a better spot, his upside-down "shimmy" head balance drawing the house despite his position.

The first of the riding acts then trotted on, it being listed the tenth display. The Tarneffs and Serillo's were listed as new, also the Ernestos. But in the center ring the pretty sight of Mme. Bradna drew all eyes. She has been working in the center ring for 20 years and still makes a corking appearance. She was not marked for the center, but the Ringlings switched her in, as they have done before.

Ena Claren again featured the posing acts, which counted six in number, the sight stuff being done quickly. Cy Compton then rushed his wild west on, his big bunch of ropers and riders including Hank Durnell, Art Boden, Madeline Dunpre, Bud Hurlin, Jack Neilson, Joe Flint and Lottie Shaw. The Pallenberg bear acts were to have been the next display, but Mme. Pallenberg failed to arrive. She had been in a Mexican circus and failed to gain admittance at the border, the authorities requiring her to return via Cuba as originally arranged.

High school horses took the ring next. Two lady riders, Minnie Taylor and Lillian Compton, looked excep-



Mother and baby hippo featured in the menagerie.

tionally well. The men riders were Adolph Hess, Manuel Herzog, John Foley, William Elliston and Frank Miller. Miller copped the honors with a jazz stepping beauty. It is probably the same horse used last year, but now the big horse is given special attention and it landed rightly. Jazz stepping so far as horses are concerned is a freak stunt.

Comedy acrobatics and equilibristic stunts had the next display, with Joe Boganghi taking the center ring for his "machanician" horse comedy bit, which lapped the display as last year. The Jung Brothers, Rice Trio, Harry Rittley, Arena Brothers, Four Comrades and Hart Brothers contributed to the mélange of stunts. Buck Baker with his nut automobiles, explosive and self-steering, amused, and the Garden was darkened for the spotlight concentration upon Lillian Leitzel, the only single star of the show.

The dainty Mmme. Leitzel in white and gold mounted the webbing for her ring work. One of the rings was slightly higher, and she had to climb to the bar above to pinch the swivel into position. Some defect caused her to curtail at the dress rehearsal, but she was bound to go through Saturday night. Leitzel held the cream spot, appearance at 10 o'clock. She was lofted again after the ring work for her "dislocation" performance, the feature that won the diminutive gymnast attention in vaudeville and now circus featuring.

Mark and Frank Huling with two trained seal acts, both working the platforms, and Alf Loyal and his dogs in the center made the next display

The seal turns went over excellently, with the ball playing bit a high-

light. Loyal's "Toque" added a new stunt in the routine for the finish. The other dogs with European flags circle the top of the ring while "Toque" with an American flag runs the opposite way hurdling the pack. Five perch acts, virtually all-foreign acrobats, followed the seals. They were the Andresen

Brothers, Three Jahns, Three Phillips, Wise Troupe and White Family. There were four in the Phillips act, but a youth under sixteen was excluded by the immigration authorities. That probably took the feature from the turn.

Adolph Hess and his three groups of liberty horses were given the Garden alone, taking the center ring with three sets of matched equines. It is spotted close to the end of the show, whereas last year the Hess performance was eight or nine displays earlier. There were six dappled grays for the start and same number of sorrels next. They looked smart and a stable door stunt was well applauded. But the closing bit, done by twelve black stallions, again landed the honors.

Rudolph Mayer and Manuel Herzog were listed to use the end rings, also with formation performing horses. Confusion at dress rehearsal led to Hess going it alone. The other horses are fresh from the other side and kept jumping out of the ring, being unused to it.

Lentiani, the three legged man.

The last riding display had the Reifenraths in the center ring, with the Torvelies and Rooney-Meers at the ends. The Reifenraths are a sister team reviving the pad system of riding. But they succeeded in landing with an extra period

stunt and made a good finish.

Tumblers and acrobats supplied a fast display late in the show. The Sic Tahar troupe, Syrians, worked in the center. A girl of the bunch, announced as the fastest female tumbler, made good the claim and traveled the length of the ring. It is a newly imported act. The Boston Brothers accomplished clever hand-to-hand work, one leaping over nine men to a handstand catch. The Loretta Sisters flashed an unusual performance on the bars. The Joe Dekoe troupe worked in the first ring and won plenty of attention. On the opposite end were grouped five contortionists, all doing individual stunts. They were the De Marlos, M. Powell, H. Ritter and F. Carot.

The aerialists closed the show, as always, and similarly held the entire house. The maze of flying and swinging work was in the expert hands of the Charles Siegrist troupe, the Clarkonians and the Siegrist-Silbon troupe. A number of young lady aerialists provided fresh interest. Ernest Clark worked though handicapped by a badly bruised foot caused when a horse stepped on him during a riding act at dress rehearsal.

There are some new freaks, but nothing exceptional. A baby hippo and mother is the animal addition.

There are two gigantic Hollanders. Captain Auger is there just the same, so are the little folks, the three-legged boy, and as Zip, Barnum's famous "What Is It." Zip looks funny this year. They've got him dolled up in boiled shirt, swallowtail coat and patent leather shoes. And a half-pint conical-shaped silk hat covers his pointed dome.

Merle Evans is again conducting the band. He has framed a corking program, with Broadway show hit numbers livening up the big top's musical contribution.



Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART THIRTY-ONE

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the days the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette.

October 21, 1916

Back in '82, which was my first season with the Adam Forepaugh show, there was a man by the name of Charlie Reed who had charge of advertising car No. 1. This means that the No. 1 car is the first advertising car to herald the coming of the great show. This car carried twenty-three people, twenty-one of whom were billposters, and Mr. Reed, the manager. The first press agent of the show also traveled on this car.

Charlie Reed had been manager of this car for several years before my advent into the business and was one of the old reliables earning a big salary. While Charlie Reed never threw away his money, he was always liberal to a fault.

When the Ringling show was in Janesville a few weeks ago, an old timer and workman who had been with the Forepaugh show for several years was one of the first to look me up, for, as he said, he wanted to visit back over the old days.

"Dave," he said, "do you know that one of my best friends in the old days was Charlie Reed, manager of advertising car No. 1. While I have not heard from him in years, if you could give me his address, I will write him a letter. I know he would be glad to learn that I am still in the land of the living."

"Mike," I said, "I am sure Charlie would be glad to hear from you and I will give you his address. Write him to Heaven, in care of

General Delivery, and Charlie will surely get your letter."

The old man dropped his head and said, "You don't say that Charlie Reed is dead?"

"Yes, he has been dead four or five years, but I have forgotten just when or where he died," I said.

"Dave," the old man said, "I think you are right, for if there is anyone getting mail in heaven, Charlie Reed would, for he was one of the nicest men that I ever knew and he is surely there."

"Do you recollect when the young man got killed down east while loading the train in the evening? I mean the one that was a deserter from the regular army and was not more than nineteen or twenty years of age. When Charlie Reed heard of his death, he sent his expense book back to you enclosing five dollars to help pay the young man's funeral expenses."

This was only one of the many times Charlie Reed's pocketbook opened to help the needy. The old man told me he had kept track of the old timers as well as he could for a man in his position, but many times in asking for them, he had found they had passed away.

The early Adam Forepaugh advertising car. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

I was never with a show that looked after the unfortunate better than the old Adam Forepaugh employees did in those days.

In my time in the business there were some three or four towns in which we would show three times a day, giving forenoon, afternoon and evening performances, as a rule to big houses, but it was left to the Gentry Bros. show some two weeks ago to show in a town four times in one day. This was at Houston, Tex., where the show has made its winter quarters for several years. Two afternoon and two evening performances were given, and each performance played to the capacity of the tent.

This idea originated in the mind of Lon B. Williams, the general agent ahead of the show. While the Gentry brothers did not approve of giving so many performances, yet they were advertised and carried out and proved to be a great success.

Many of the old timers in Janesville will remember Frank Gormley who early in the eighties was ticket agent and treasurer of the Burr Robbins show, for it was in Janesville for many weeks that Mr. Gormley helped to fit out the show in the spring and put it away into winter quarters in the fall.

Frank Gormley died at the Sacred Heart Hospital, Delavan, Wis., on September 26 from spinal trouble with which he had been afflicted for some time.

Mr. Gormley for years was also manager of the French & Monroe circus of New Orleans, of the Renta & Ashley show and of the Holland Gormley show of Delavan. He was born in Delavan in 1858 and



was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick M. Gormley. He was married to Miss Nettle Smith, who survives him, about twenty-three years ago. A son, Harold Gormley, his mother and a brother, Everett H. Gormley, also survives him. He was a member of the Delavan lodge No. 59, Knights of Pythias.

Last week at the New Myers Theater Mr. and Mrs. Edmunds of Nashville, Tenn., under the name of Edmunds and Lavelle, did a very high-class black face act. Mr. Edmunds, during the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, was one of the sixteen ticket sellers and treasurers of the Buffalo Bill show.

Mr. Edmunds told many interesting stories of the happenings of that time and how they had to make special arrangements with one of the banks in Chicago to care for the tons of silver that they had to deposit at that time. He said if he could only go back and have another year like that he would see to it that he took better care of the money he had. Many days he alone sold upwards of 20,000 tickets and during the summer hundreds of people walked away without their change.


The board of governors of the Showmen's League of America held a special meeting a few weeks ago. Contributions for Showmen's League Day are still coming in. The total is rapidly reaching a big figure. Those who have not sent in their donations are asked to do so as soon as possible so that the fund can be closed.

The membership of the league has grown greatly during the past summer and the organization is on a sound financial basis.

The amusement committee has a number of projects in view for the winter months, all of which will afford the members pleasure as well as swell the bank account.

Mrs. John H. Snellen returned to Bridgeport recently, having spent the summer in Baraboo. Mrs. Snellen says they like to reside in Bridgeport and have become attached to the city. Mr. Snellen has long been with the Barnum & Bailey show and with others shares the responsibility of seeing the attractions continue to make a success.

Ringling Brothers have added sufficient machinery for making tents at



"The largest and best exhibition which ever visited our city."—[Providence Journal].

HOWE'S Great London Circus.

Sanger's British Menagerie,

—AND—

COLLECTION OF TRAINED WILD BEASTS,
Is now making its first Grand Tour of New England, and will exhibit in

BOSTON,
On the Old Fair Grounds, for Four Days only,
commencing

TUESDAY, JUNE 18th.
Four Hundred Men and Horses.
ONE HUNDRED ENGLISH RIDERS,
Acrobats, Gymnasts, Clowns, &c., who have never before appeared in New England.

The Hardest and Best Selected Menagerie Ever Organized.
And a Collection of Performing Animals,
including a number of the most untractable varieties, and such as have never before been brought under subjection.

The Grandest Street Procession the World Has Ever Seen.
ADMISSION 50 cents; Children 25 cents.

HOWE'S GREAT LONDON CIRCUS
Will Exhibit at
FITCHBURG, June 10th; GROTON JUNCTION, 11th;
CLINTON, 12th; MARLBORO', 13th; CONCORD, 14th;
WALTHAM, 15th; CHARLESTOWN, 17th; SOUTH BOSTON, SATURDAY, JUNE 22d.

The 1872 Howe's show was operated by Egbert and Elbert Howes.

the Bridgeport winter quarters. While the show is idle the big tops are constructed.

October 28, 1916

The moving pictures of today seem to be the one thing that the public in general is willing to give up their time and money for. I am going to tell you of two moving pictures which I watched with much interest years ago. While these pictures never were put on film and but few people were interested in watching them outside of those in the circus business, these two were watched with much interest for several years.

It was back in the early seventies that Howes Great London Show was brought from England to this country by the owners, Egbert and Elbert Howes, who, by the way, were twin brothers. While possibly this show was not the largest in the country, it was one of the finest ever organized and was heralded in this country for months before it landed. For a little time it prospered, but shortly after its arrival, the Jay Cook panic of

1873, which was one of the worst financial panics that this country ever saw, Howes Great London Show lost many thousands of dollars that season. Even later it seemed to be hard for the proprietors to get the show into any part of the country where it would be successful. To those in the business who watched it with much interest, it could plainly be seen that it was on the downgrade with but little or no chance to stem the tide. So the show went on until it finally failed. The Howes brothers lost every dollar they had and were left on the shady side of life penniless and without a chance to ever recoup their lost fortune.

The other picture was a show of more than ordinary fame known as the Van Amburgh Show with its winter quarters at Connersville, Ind. The proprietors, Jerry Ferguson and Hyatt Frost were thorough showmen and men that had spent all the better part of their lives in the business. This same panic affected them, and after two or three losing seasons, they, too, like the Howes brothers, had to give up the fight and go to the wall. In these two failures there were four men who had spent the better part of their lives to become rich and famous the world over, who were down and out and must ask something to do for a livelihood. Here is where the sad ending of their life's work ended. The only business they had ever known was the circus business, so they commenced to cast around looking for something in that line. The next spring two of these men, Egbert Howes and Jerry Ferguson, were found at the main entrance of the Forepaugh show liking tickets and working for a salary far less than they had paid hundreds of people while they were in the business.

Elbert Howes, the other brother, was given a similar position with the Barnum show, and Hyatt Frost embarked in another business in his old home in Connersville, Ind. While Adam Forepaugh was a close figurer in a business way and the men had both been his rivals in the business for years, he was the first to come to the front and offer both of them work that would at least keep the wolf from the door. Then the saddest of this world's picture came to an end

when Adam Forepaugh died, and his two old trusted door tenders had to look elsewhere for something to do.

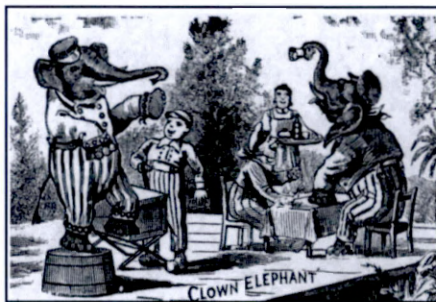
They were not alone, for there were others who had put in the best part of their lives in the business with Mr. Forepaugh. When they would look to other shows for something to do, their age and gray hairs were against them, for they were looking for coming men instead of going. But all through the years that Egbert Howes and Jerry Ferguson were with the Forepaugh show, I was careful to show them the greatest respect and many times invite them to luncheon with me in the evening after the show was over, for I well knew that every dollar these men were earning had to be sent home, for this was the only income that they had.

I have often thought if it were possible to get a moving picture of the world's famous showmen, Ringling Brothers, for the start of their career in the business when the youngest of the brothers were barely away from their knee pants, showing their outfit from the time that the older of the brothers, Al, was working in Brodhead at his trade and practicing different acts that he expected to put before the people in an old barn near where he was employed and following them later to the different towns when they were in hall show business showing them at times getting from town to another on their hunks and something of the hardships they went through in many instances before they even owned a horse or any part of a canvas. They were all so thoroughly imbued, though, with the circus idea that their determination and courage carried them over many an obstacle where the ordinary man would have given up. Then show the first canvas, which they bought, and many of the small towns and crowds that they showed to for some years when they had a small wagon show.

Along about the middle eighties I came home from the Forepaugh show and the day or two after the Ringling show was billed to show in Clinton, Wis., and I went down and spent the day with the Ringlings and rode over the country with them to Edgerton the following day where they closed the season and drove home to Baraboo where, at that time, much of the remodeling for the coming season

was down by the brothers. If this moving picture could be produced of the Ringlings' lives in show business and played along year after year until they finally became proprietors of two of the greatest shows in the world--the Ringling and the Barnum, with one show opening at Madison Square Garden in New York and the other at the Coliseum in Chicago.

While this was not what you might call a sudden rise, it was a sure one and year after year brought its



results. Would not a picture of this sort make one that millions of people would gladly give their money and spend their time to look at? The ending of a picture like this would certainly leave the audience in a better mood than the ending of either Howes Great London or the Van Amburgh show. All these are only imaginary movies in the minds of the writer.

A baby daughter was born October 23rd to Miss Billie Burke, noted stage star, who in private life is Mrs. Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., wife of the well known theatrical manager. Inquiring friends were told at the Ansonia Hotel, where Mr. and Mrs. Ziegfeld have apartments, that both mother and baby are well and hearty.

Now what shall we name it? Billie, I guess.

The Al G. Barnes Wild Animal Circus and the Sells-Floto Circus are preparing for a merry war on October 30 when they will play day and date at El Paso, Tex. Some plastering El Paso is going to get as both No. 1 cars of the show are due here simultaneously. "Skinny" McMann is in charge of the Sells-Floto car and Harry Davis in charge of the Barnes.

There is also going to be a "hot time" in San Antonio. The Barnum & Bailey show is due in the city; the Barnes show comes in for two days and also the Sells-Floto. Inasmuch as there are 12,000 soldiers in San

Antonio and all have money and can spend it, all the shows should do big business.

Tragedy closed the career of Mrs. Pearl Jones who, in her younger days as Katie La Pearl, was a sensational bareback rider in the leading circuses. She was struck and killed by a streetcar on Wednesday, October 24th at her home in Columbus, Ohio.

As this is nearly the end of the season when the shows win go into winter quarters, the following poem written by an old clown years ago, is an interesting one.

"When the Season Closes"
Get together, chilly weather,
Warm your frozen noses,
Waiting for the "Blow off" day
When the season closes.
Get together, colder weather,
Everyone supposes,
That we'll get "all kinds of rates"
When the season closes.
Closing day near froze us.
All aboard for "home, sweet home,"
When the season closes.

November 4, 1916

As the presidential election draws near, it reminds me of years ago when Harrison and Grover Cleveland were the candidates in '88. If my old employer, Adam Forepaugh, was anything, he was a Democrat and could see but little good in anybody that was not. He felt so certain that Cleveland would be elected that he offered to bet almost any amount that Grover would be the next president.

It was along about the latter part of August that we were showing in a little town in Ohio that three representative businessmen of the town put in an appearance at the ticket office about 10:30 o'clock in the forenoon, while the parade was out, and inquired for Mr. Forepaugh. I told them he was Just on the other side of the wagon in the shade, reading a paper. They stepped around and asked him if he was willing to bet \$10,000 that Cleveland would be the next president, saying that they were three of the representative businessmen of the town and were willing to water \$10,000 on Harrison. Mr. Forepaugh immediately came around to the side door of the ticket wagon and asked me if I had time to

go downtown and attend to a little business for him and when I said I had, he said:

"You take \$10,000 down to any bank that these men designate and tell the cashier that if that old Harrison is elected, to give the money to these gentlemen, and if Grover Cleveland is elected, to send the money to Adam Forepaugh at 1628 Green Street, Philadelphia."

That seemed to be pretty sudden for the townsmen and they said: "Mr. Forepaugh, we would rather you would go down to the bank and have the banker draw up a contract of some kind so that we would have something to show."

This did not sound well to the old showman and he immediately said: "Are you afraid of your own banker? I am not. I don't see any excuse for any contract. I am willing to leave my money in any bank that you choose and this ought to be enough."

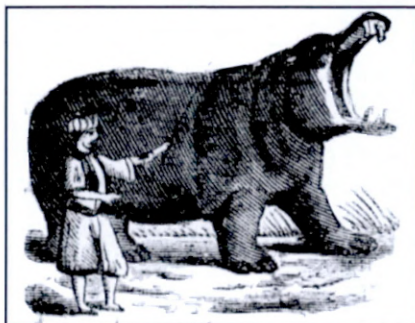
But they evidently had not gotten their money together. Mr. Forepaugh and they got into a heated argument, and one of them told the old showman that he need not talk quite so plain to them, for they could go downtown and spread the news and hurt his business. Whereupon old Adam told them that he wished a thousand times that he could tell a black Republican from a Democrat, and if he could, he would not let one of them into his show at any price. While the old man did not get this wager, when the election was over and Harrison had been elected, Mr. Forepaugh found himself a little over \$3,000 to the bad.

One day, while he was counting up the afternoon house, I thought I would touch him up a little politically. This was some four weeks before the election. I told him that if I had \$1,000, I would be willing to make a wager with him on Harrison. At this the old man lost his temper and offered to loan me \$1,000 to bet him and said that if I lost I could pay it back to him \$10 at a time. When he was through counting up the afternoon house, he went over to the main entrance of the show and told his wife what I had said. As soon as Mrs. Forepaugh could see me, when Adam was not around, she said: "Dave, for heaven's sake, don't talk politics to Adam, for you know better than any-

body how excited he gets, and for my sake, please don't mention politics to him again." The show closed that year before election and the next season I was careful never to mention Harrison's name, for it would surely earn my discharge if I did. I never would look the same to Mr. Forepaugh again.

Among the letters from the different shows giving the closing dates, and where a few of the highest-class people in the business will spend the winter, are the following:

Gollmar Bros. show is at present in Arkansas and up to date business has been big. At Ozark the show drew big houses both afternoon and night. Clarksville the next day was even bigger, the top being packed nearly to the at ring banks at the matinee. The show closed Tuesday,



Nov. 2, Frederickstown, Mo., making a season of twenty-five and a half weeks. A special train was run to St. Louis from the closing stand. Most of the people will go to Chicago, Cincinnati and Kansas City. The season as a whole has been good, the weather having been much better than usual.

The 1916 tour of the Ringling Bros. circus will be brought to a close at Baton Rouge, La., today, Nov. 4, instead of Clarksdale. It was officially announced several days ago that the season would run until Nov. 6 with Baton Rouge the closing stand, but since, it has been decided to eliminate New Orleans from the route. It was figured to put in two days there—Nov. 4 and 5, on account of the exorbitant license—and make Baton Rouge Nov. 4 the closing town.

May Martin Wirth, the sensational equestrienne, will again be seen on the sawdust of this country next season, having been engaged by the Ringlings as their feature equestrienne. She will work in three film pro-

ductions with Charlie Chaplin before her arrival here (she is now in Australia with Wirth Bros. circus) and the opening of the circus season.

The Yankee Robinson show was the first in Texas this season and will likely be the last as the tour has been extended to Christmas before all the farmers buy "tin lizzies" with their 20-cent cotton.

Over in Old Mexico the other day they gave a bullfight benefit for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The following letter from Keith and Albee is more interesting to me for it was back in '82 that these boys traveled with the Adam Forepaugh show and were my personal friends. It was here that they laid the foundation for their success in the show business and the millions they have acquired. They'd today to be the largest owners and managers of theatrical houses in the United States. The letter was written to Dr. Thorek of Chicago, Ill. It follows: "My Dear Doctor: We have received an interesting article printed in the Chicago Herald of June 13, 1916, also one of your pamphlets setting forth the needs of the new American hospital and containing cuts showing the same in its present shape. Since the receipt of this, we have been making inquiries in reference to the same and are pleased to note the many good things said about yourself and the interest that you have taken in theatrical people, especially the vaudeville branch.

"Those with whom we have talked have been unstinting in their praise of the efficient work that you have done for a large number of theatrical people for a very nominal fee, if any, and they also cite remarkable cures you have effected, which have sent the artists back to their work well and rejoicing, whereas had it not been for your consideration and great professional assistance, the results would have been very disastrous. By the erection of this hospital you are fulfilling a long felt want in the theatrical profession, the members of which are always generous in giving their talent for raising money for wants other than their own. They think of themselves last.

"We enclose a check for \$2,000 and with it goes our sincere wishes that

the enterprise of which you, in the goodness of your heart, are working so hard to accomplish, will be an assured fact. We would be glad to be called upon at any time to exert our influence and to assist you in any way we can toward the accomplishment of your purpose. Very sincerely yours, A. Paul Keith, E. A. Albee"

While at Huntsville, Ala., a fire broke out in one of the Ringling Bros. circus tents where the horses are fed and 81 horses were either killed or injured. When the show left Huntsville, it was short the above number of horses. How the fire started is not known, but it must have spread rapidly. In this tent is usually a large amount of hay and straw, which burns rapidly. It is thought that the horses burned were the ones used in hauling the wagons. The circus will arrive at Baraboo some time next week, closing at Baton Rouge, La. today.

November 11, 1916

On Thursday of this week, I received a letter from the editors of the Baraboo *Daily News* giving me the particulars of the sale of the Gollmar Brothers Circus of that city. The Patterson Carnival Company of Paola, Kansas were the purchasers, but the consideration was not given.

The owners of the Gollmar show at the time of the sale were the four brothers, Charles A., Benjamin F., Frederick C. and W. S. Gollmar. So far as is known, no definite arrangements for the future have been made.

The show was organized about twenty-five years ago in Baraboo and started out as a wagon show. In the beginning it was a small, unpretentious affair, but it was a success from the time of its organization and kept steadily growing until, at the present time, it is one of the finest of its size on the road.

Two years ago this coming spring I visited the show at Fort Atkinson, which was its second stand of that season and everything about the show, was new. The canvases of both the main shows and the sideshows were new and all the cages and wagons were all remodeled during the winter. The entire train of twenty-



A wonderful 24 sheet poster used by Gollmar Bros Circus.

three cars, including three sleepers and a private car of the Gollmar's, were all repainted so that the entire train when it was loaded and ready to pull out for the next stands looked like everything was brand new. The entire train was electric lighted and when it pulled out it was the finest show train that I had ever seen and, in fact, it was the only one that was electric lighted from one end to the other.

While the show in all these years at different times has had its setbacks and had its trials in rainy seasons and missed more or less stands on account of bad weather, the Gollmar show has always been kept clean and always catered to the best possible for their patrons.

Thousands of people in different towns in which they showed for so many years will hear with regret of the passing of the show into other hands. While the Gollmars are around, or possibly past middle age, they are still young and ambitious and I think it was hardly likely that they would retire at this early age from the business entirely. But they tell me that no definite plans have been made for the future. Whatever their plans may be, thousands of people who know them best and especially those who have traveled with them, many of whom have been there for years, will only wish the Gollmar brothers the best that can come to them in the future.

Last spring with a friend I visited the show in Beloit and on our arrival the Gollmars soon took my friend and myself in charge and saw to it personally that we had the best and were introduced to all those connected with the show in any kind of any official capacity. It was characteristic of

the Gollmars that when a friend arrived to see the show, they always had time to entertain him and make him feel that he was the one of all others that was welcome. May they prosper in any future undertaking is the wish of one who has known them for many years.

Ed M. Ballard of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, upon receipt of a wire from the Ringling Brothers telling of the fire in their barns which burned a number of their horses, some of the rest being so badly burned they had to be put to death, immediately sent four carloads of draft stock or one hundred and twelve head from West Baden, Indiana. Harness for each horse was also sent. The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus closed its season at West Baden October 26th and the horses had just been turned loose on the farm nine miles outside of West Baden when Mr. Ballard received the message.

A recent letter from the Ringling show gives an account of their business through the different cities of the South. In Birmingham, Ala., in the late eighties the Adam Forepaugh show had one of the largest single day's business of the season. We showed there on Monday and the general admission to both afternoon and evening performances was one dollar and at both performances played to the capacity of the house. This was in the boom days of Birmingham when everybody seemed to have their pockets full of money. The following letter tells of the enormous business of the Ringlings there this year.

The Ringling Brothers Circus played to two turn-a-ways here. Long before the afternoon performance began, thousands of people thronged the show grounds and at each show hundreds of people were seated on straw. The circus men themselves are quoted as saying that the attendance in Birmingham was the greatest they had at any city in the South. It is safe to predict that should the Ringling show return next season, it will make Birmingham a two days' stand.

If any of the circuses in the country are looking for a curiosity for the coming season, here is surely one: "At

Macon, Ga., the management of file Ringling show received a letter from a South Carolina gentleman enclosing 15 cents and the following explanation:

"A few days ago when your circus was in town, I took my boy into the side show, purchasing a 25 cent ticket for myself and a dime ticket for my boy. Afterward I learned the admission was two bits for children over twelve and my boy has passed twelve so I enclose the 15 cents difference."

H. H. Tammen, joint owner with F. G. Bonfils of the Sells-Floto shows, is seriously ill at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. Mr. Tammen has not been well for several weeks and following a siege which forced him to spend a week in bed at his Denver home, came on to Chicago, accompanied by Mrs. Tarmmen and Dr. Kenney, his personal physician, for the purpose of consulting specialists.

His physicians have not made the exact nature of Mr. Tammen's illness public, but it is feared an operation will be necessary before he gains any great relief, although this is complicated by, reason of his suffering from a weak heart, which renders an operation a matter of great delicacy. It is not to be implied that Mr. Tarmmen's illness is necessarily dangerous, but several weeks spent with the show during which he took a very active part in the management, placed a severe tax upon his strength, and it is the opinion of his physicians that whether or not it will be necessary to operate, a long rest is imperative.

It is reported here that a great many changes will be made in the Sells-Floto shows before they take the road next season. At the time of his being taken ill, Mr. Tammen was working on plans to vastly improve the show in every department and this work will be carried on during his illness by his subordinates.

On Tuesday last, shortly after noon, the Ringling show arrived at their winter quarters in Baraboo after closing one of the most success-

ful seasons in the history of the show. It will only be a short time until many people will be at work in the winter quarters rebuilding and getting the show in shape for another year.

The great Barnum show will close the season on Monday next, Nov. 13th, at Memphis, Tenn., after which the show will be shipped directly to their winter quarters in Bridgeport,

Conn., where they, too, will rebuild, and it will not be long until the great show will be in readiness to open the season of 1917 at Madison Square Garden, New York City.

H. H. Tammen

This is what makes show business a busy life, for they have no sooner closed the season of one year until all heads of the different departments are at work getting ready for the next season.

November 18, 1916

It was along toward the middle of the season in 1888 that a solid built young man of some sixteen or seventeen years of age applied to Adam Forepaugh, Jr. for a position with the show. While young Forepaugh thought he was too young and tried to discourage him, he saw that the young man was fixed in his determination to travel with the show and he might be the kind that would make him a good assistant in the training of the "bulls," as they called it with the circus business, which meant the elephants. He gave the young man the position and put him to work. This was the start in the business of the young man whose name was Ed Holder and whose home at the time was in Battle Creek, Mich. That was the commencement of young Holder's life work in show business, for he is still on the road and has traveled practically the world over several times.

Last Friday evening, I stepped into the corridor of the Hotel Myers and across the room in the other corner a man waved his hand and called:

"Hello, Dave." I was soon over to where I could get a look at him, and saw that it was Ed Holder whom I had only met once in more than twenty-five years. As soon as I saw his face I recognized him the first thing and said: "Ed, how is the mule?" "Well," he said, "that is a good thing. You are like every other countryman that I meet. They never seem to ask how I am, but it is always, Ed, how's the mule?"

"Holder had the best educated mule in the country and I said: 'Ed, it is no wonder that the boys ask for the mule, for there are only two of you in the family and the mule is the bread winner.'"

Mr. Holder and I were soon visiting over old days and incidentally he said: "There is no question about the mule, Ebenezer, as we call him, being all right as long as he can get enough to eat. He can certainly eat more than any two mules I ever saw. He has the capacity of a corn crib."

"Then," I said, "if I were you, I should change his name, for Ebenezer is not becoming to a mule." When he asked me what name I would suggest, I told him that on account of his capacity to store away things, I thought that "Silo" would be a good name for him.

Mr. Holder and his mule were here to fill an engagement of three days, after which they went back to Chicago for three days and from there to Marion, Indiana. They had an engagement of two weeks at the big Toronto, Canada exposition this fall where they were the hit of the entire show. Mr. Holder took me to the dressing room of the Myers Theatre to take a look at Ebenezer, but as mules never looked any too good to me, I kept my distance, for I always thought that a mule's ears were as much of a danger signal as his tail. Yet, if I had to be a mule, I would want to be Ed Holder's.

Mr. Holder is a member of the Showmen's League of America and when in Chicago can always be found at the Showmen's Club room in the Saratoga Hotel. Years ago, one of the largest and most dangerous of all elephants was one by the name of Bolivar with the Forepaugh Show and as Ed Holder was assistant trainer with Adam Forepaugh, Jr., he was thrown in with old "Bolivar"

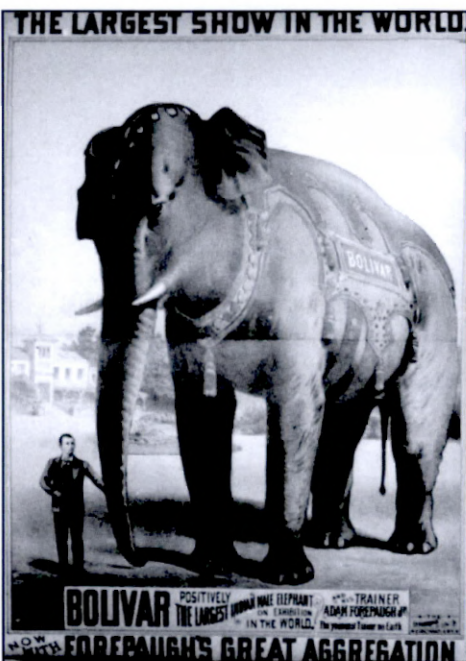


many times every day. But he knew old Bolivar's disposition and as he told me the other day, while he always admired him (old Bolivar) personally for his gameness, he knew well that he would kill him as soon as look at him "But all the time I was with the show," Mr. Holder continued, "Bolivar never saw my back. I was always face to face with him, knowing full well that his disposition would be to kill a man every day if possible."

It was in '89 that Adam Forepaugh made Bolivar a present to the managers of the zoo in Philadelphia, where they could keep him with safety and every time that Ed Holder showed in Philadelphia he always made a trip out to the zoo to see old Bolivar. Two years ago this fall Bolivar was taken sick and died and this put an end to one of the most dangerous elephants that I have ever seen.

Mr. Holder and his mule are never without an engagement and it is fair to say that they have traveled as many miles as almost any two in the business. Ed Holder also has six trained pigs which he has booked for ten weeks through the vaudeville circuits and when I asked him what they could do, he smiled and said: "They can do anything but play the piano or sing in grand opera." On account of their long engagement it is evident that they can do something.

A letter written from the Barnum show to the *Billboard* a few days ago is of more than ordinary interest to me as it mentions the names of several of my old friends that I traveled with years ago. Halloween on the lot at Quanah, Tex., the fourth annual Halloween party given by the lady performers, will live long in the memories of those who saw or took part in the festivities. The main dressing room was decorated with the Halloween colors and an elaborate spread to which everyone was invited, was laid in its commodious interior: "After dinner everybody went to the big top, and it is safe to say that the mammoth tent never saw such gaiety and merriment as indulged in by its own children--the children of the circus. Some of the members on the program were trained bear acts by Mrs. Charles



This Adam Forepaugh lithograph featured Bolivar. Cincinnati Art Museum.

Siegrist and Mrs. Emil Pallenberg. An event long to be remembered by those who witnessed it was the wonderfully artistic comeback of the Mother of the Circus, Mrs. Talbot."

Mrs. Talbot I knew when she was one of the premier dancers of the Kiralfy Brothers who were the greatest spectacular producers of their time. Mrs. Talbot is now over seventy years old. I also knew the Siegrist family and many others who took part in the above-mentioned program

Another week and the big Barnum & Bailey family will be widely scattered.

The Siegrist-Silbon troupe of trapeze performers.



tered, most of them continuing their vocation behind the footlights and the various theatrical circuits, while a great many will return to their homes to rest up for the winter. The Charlie Siegrist troupe, including Mr. and Mrs. Siegrist, Toby Thomas, Tom Beckman and Florence Siegrist, will sail immediately after the season closes for Buenos Aires, S. A., to fulfill vaudeville contracts which will keep them busy the whole winter.

"Spader" Johnson also will enter vaudeville. He will open in New York with his own company of six people in "The Hicksville Barber," under the direction of Joe Shea. The act should be a big hit, for "Spader" is an old timer in the game and well known for his ability to put such things over.

The Gollmar Brothers show closed the season at Frederickstown, Mo., on Thursday of last week and the show went to Paola, Kan., having been purchased by James Patterson who has heretofore operated a carnival. An elephant stampeded at the last stand of the season, breaking down a house, killing a pig and doing other injury. Jack Beach, Fred Morgan and Butch Cohen, the fixers with the show, got away with a hundred dollars, which is considered clever work. The Gollmar Brothers and some of the people came to Chicago. Several acts stopped over in St. Louis.

On the way home from the Southland, the Ringling circus made very good time. The attraction is now housed for the winter so that repairs may be made on the material and the animals as well as the men enjoy a rest. The show came from Baton Rouge direct to Baraboo. Those with the show who have been accustomed to living in the old hotel near the winter quarters were surprised to find a new building when they reached Baraboo this time. The building is not quite complete, but was near enough ready to receive the guests. The old hotel torn down was a landmark in the city, going back to the village days in Baraboo.

November 25, 1916

On Wednesday afternoon of

last week, I took a train for Chicago and after arriving there and having dinner with two or three friends, we immediately went to the headquarters of the Showmen's League, which is located on the first floor in the Saratoga Hotel on Dearborn Street. As the Barnum show had closed at Memphis, Tenn., on Monday, dozens of people from the show arrived the same evening and I was soon meeting old friends and making new ones, for it is at the club rooms of the Showmen's League that they all report as soon as possible after their arrival.

George Arlington was associated with the Miller and Arlington 101 Ranch wild west.

Colonel Cody, "Buffalo Bill," whose show had closed the Saturday before, was a guest at the LaSalle Hotel where I found him the next day and had a long visit with him, going back over the old days and listen to his stories of the happenings of this last season, which was one of the most successful the show had ever seen. I had not seen Colonel Cody look better in ten years than he does today. On Thursday evening the Showmen's League was to give him a reception at the clubrooms where dozens of decorators were at work getting ready. But as I had made arrangements to be home that night, it was impossible for me to stay and next week will give you the particulars of the reception which they gave to the most famous of all frontiersmen, "Buffalo Bill."

The regular Friday evening meetings of the Showmen's League of America are well attended and each week sees an increasing number of new faces as the shows are closing.

The donations for the ward in the American Theatrical Hospital are all in and a check, for \$1,000 was turned over to the hospital so that they can start the work as soon as the interior is completed. On election night a special Western Union wire was run in and an operator secured so that the boys could get the news firsthand

and earlier than the papers would get out the reports. The rooms were packed with everyone rooting for his favorite and it beat any bunch of balldroppers ever heard on the midway.

A new circus with familiar faces among the management will play the Pacific Coast towns next season if the plans already launched materialize. Boyd and Ogle, who have had a one ring show out for several seasons have taken a partner in the person of W. A. Hoskings, and the new firm will be known as Boyd, Ogle & Hoskings.



"Doc" Boyd and Mr. Hoskings left for India Saturday, November 4, for the purpose of securing animals for the menagerie, which will be a strong feature of the show. Ogle is in charge of the new winter quarters, which have been built at West Sacramento.

George Arlington, an old time friend of mine dating back to the late 70's, has bought out the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Show and he, with his son, Edward Arlington, who has been the advance man of the show for many years, will be the proprietors and managers next season.

George Arlington was manager of privileges with the Barnum show for many years and knows the game from the front door to the dressing room. His son Edward is one of the highest-class advance agents in the business and this combination for years to come should surely be a successful one.

George Arlington will immediately open permanent offices for the show in the Times Building, New York, where he will be assisted by Roy Gill, treasurer.

Earlier in the year Mr. Arlington had about decided to retire from business and Colonel Miller also had evinced a desire to at least retire from the active participation in the arena, although an announcement to the effect that this was his last year

in the show business was emphatically denied by Colonel Miller. This resulted in several announcements that the show was on the market, but evidently the remarkable earning ability evinced by the show the past two seasons during which the earnings were the largest in the shows history, caused Mr. Arlington to reconsider his determination to retire and instead to purchase his partner's interests, taking over the entire show himself and placing his son, Edward, considered one of the most capable showmen in business, in charge of the active management.

The show during 1916 toured under the title of Buffalo Bill 101 Ranch Combined Shows, featuring Colonel Cody setting up the record of not missing a parade or performance during the one hundred and eighty day season.

E. G. Holland, veteran circus man, last season with the Cook & Wilson Circus was selected as chief of the ushers during the term of the horse show at Madison Square Garden, N. Y., from November 11 to 18th, inclusive.

In my last week's story of Ed Holder and his educated mule, I neglected to tell you how they travel from one town to another which many times is one hundred and fifty miles or more. They always travel on the passenger trains and when the train pulls into the station, they have what they call a box stall for the mule which is built much on the order of an old-fashioned kitchen table with the two leaves on the side. This they lean up against the door of the express car, which avoids any possibility of the mule slipping off the side or getting injured. Then the leaf on the back of the box stall is raised and fastened and on top of these leaves is a heavy woven wire so that if anyone in the car gets injured by the mule, it is their own fault. When they left Janesville to show me something of the sagacity of the mule, the colored caretaker, when the train came in, set his runway crooked. The mule took a look at it and knew it was wrong and took his nose and pushed it around until it was perfectly straight before he would take a chance in walking into the car.

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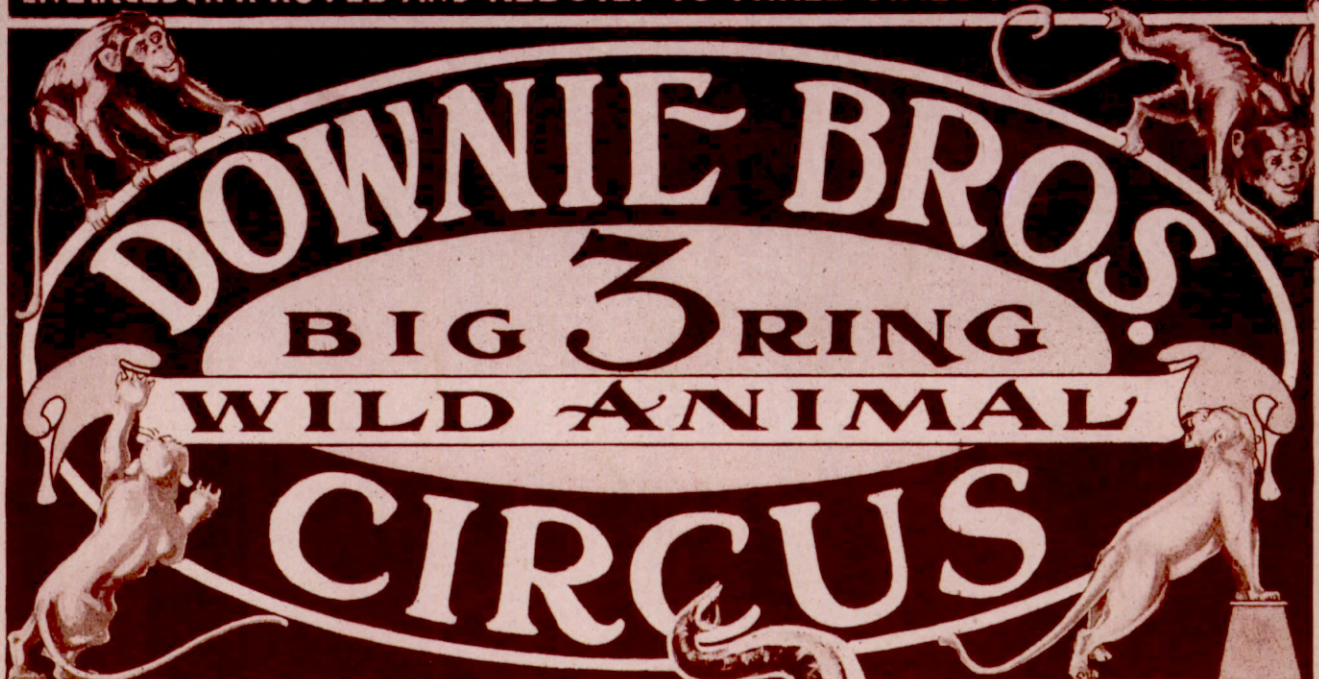
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